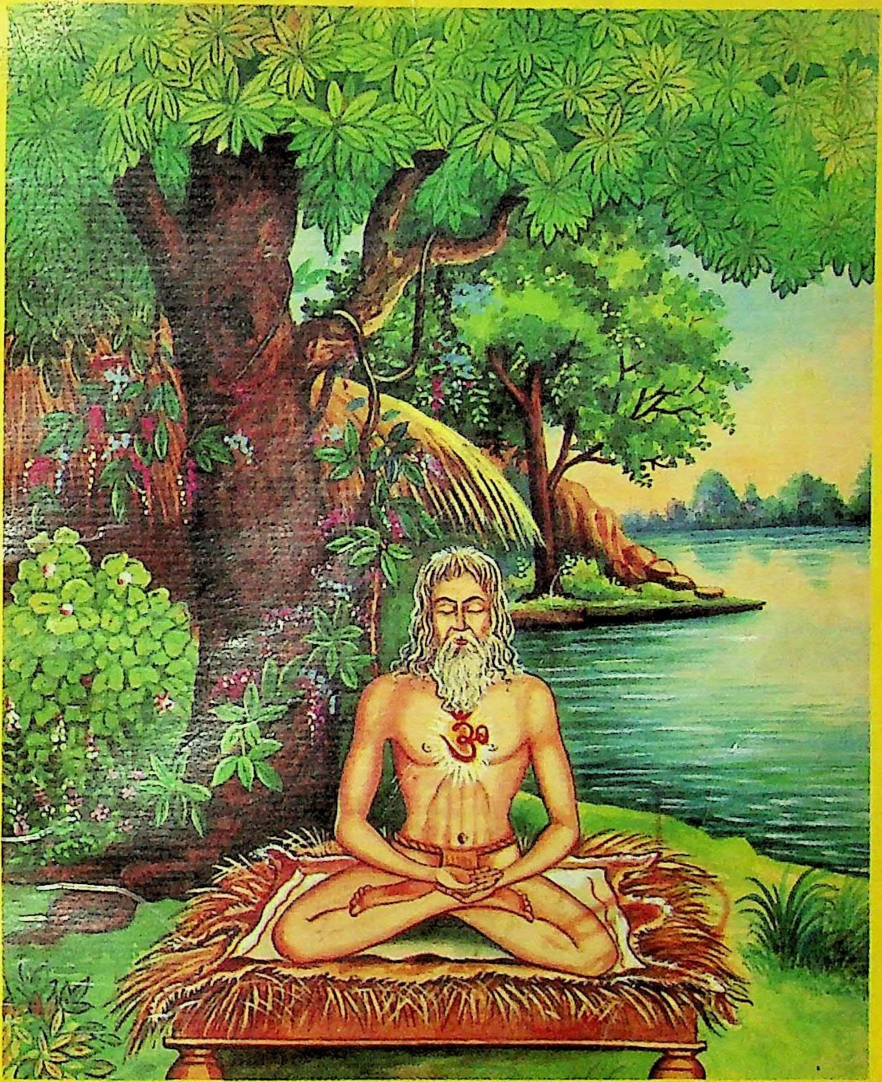
The Kalyana-Kalpataru



अयं तु परमो धर्मो यद्योगेनात्मदर्शनम्

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—Editor

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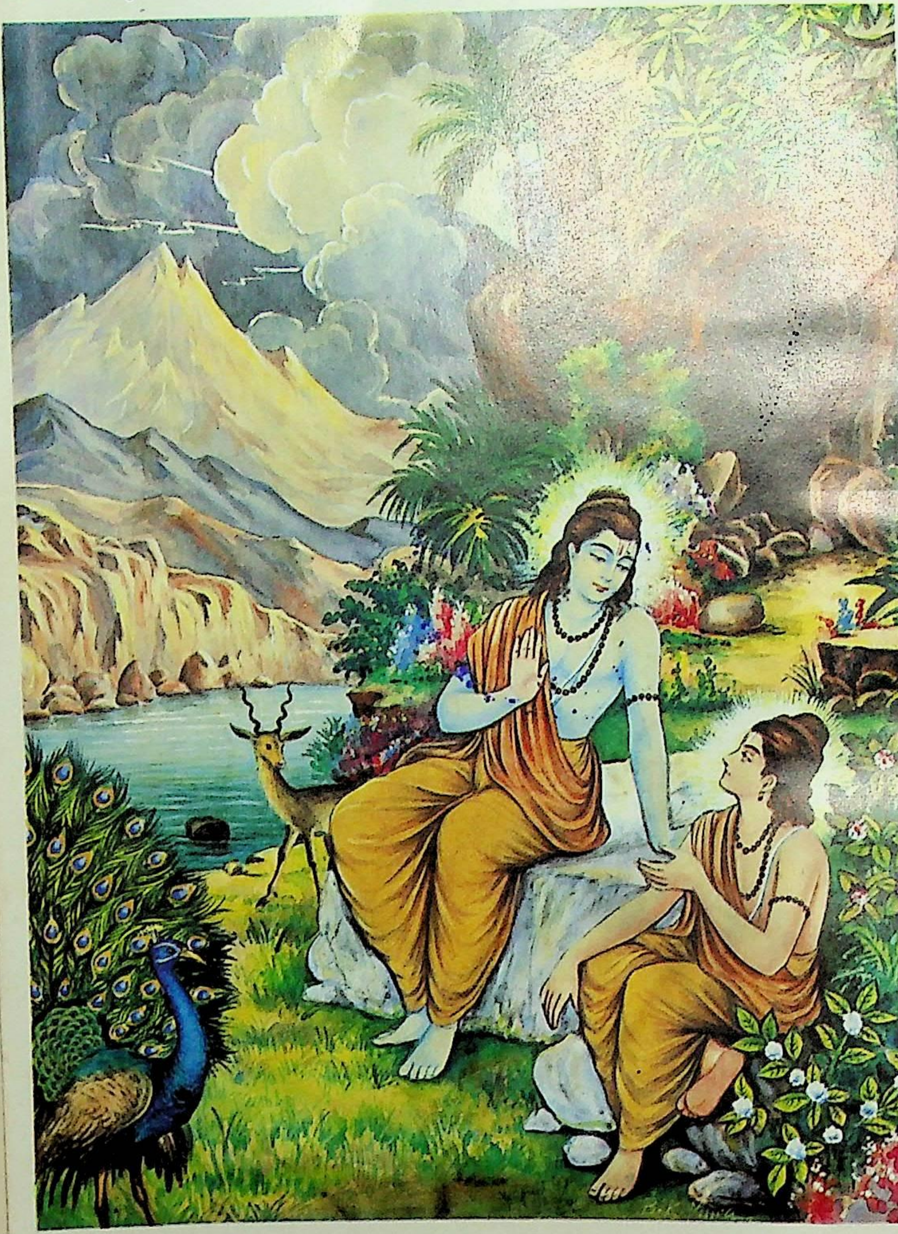
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Rāmo Vigrahavān Dharmaḥ

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते । पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥



The KALYANA-KALPATARU

OR

THE BLISS

A MONTHLY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF SPIRITUAL IDEAS AND LOVE FOR GOD

New series
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October 1993

No. 1

न रामः कर्कशस्तात नाविद्वान् नाजितेन्द्रियः ।
अनृतं न श्रुतं चैव नैव त्वं वक्तुमर्हसि ॥
रामो विग्रहवान् धर्मः साधुः सत्यपराक्रमः ।
राजा सर्वस्य लोकस्य देवानामिव वासवः ॥

Nor is Rāma hard-hearted, O dear one, nor ignorant, nor are his senses unsubdued. Nor has any charge of falsehood been heard (about him) nor ought you to level any such charge against him. Rāma is virtue incarnate, pious and of unfailing prowess. He is the ruler of the entire humanity (even) as Indra is the ruler of gods.

—*Śrīmad Vālmīkīya Rāmāyaṇa* (III. 37. 12-13)

Dharma According to the Bhagavadgītā

—His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Jayendra Sarasvatiji Maharaja,

Sri Shankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Pitha

The *Bhagavadgītā* constitutes the words spoken by *Bhagavān* Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna, or rather the sage counsel of the Lord, imparted to Arjuna. Just before the commencement of the *Mahābhārata* war, Arjuna felt a desire to have a look at those with whom he would have to fight and requested Kṛṣṇa to station his chariot in between the *Kaurava* and *Pāṇḍava* forces, drawn in battle array at Kurukshetra. This done, Arjuna was much upset on seeing elders, cousins, near relatives, preceptors and dear friends in the enemy front and in his own army. He stood engulfed by confusion between the real and unreal, between the true and untrue and between true knowledge and illusion. It was at this juncture that Lord Kṛṣṇa revealed to Arjuna the sage advice contained in the words of wisdom found in the *Gītā*.

The *Bhagavadgītā*—the song celestial—is described as the essence of the *Upaniṣads* in one of the verses intended for *Dhyāna* (meditation) upon the *Gītā*—

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दनः ।
पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥

In the above verse the *Gītā* is described as the nectar-like milk got from the cows—the *Upaniṣads*. The cowherd who milks the cows, is Kṛṣṇa while the calf is Arjuna. Those who enjoy drinking the milk, are the wise intellectuals. Though the Lord says that the counsel imparted to Arjuna is a spiritual secret and almost the fag-end of the *Gītā,* it is evident from the purport of the verse quoted above, that the advice imparted to Arjuna is intended for the benefit of all those who are in search of enlightenment and of true knowledge.

The greatness and importance of this song celestial, and the necessity of its being read and understood, cannot be put in better words than those of sage Vyāsa who says in the Epic *Mahābhārata:—*

गीता सुगीता कर्तव्या किमन्यैः शास्त्रविस्तरैः ।
या स्वयं पद्मनाभस्य मुखपद्माद्विनिःसृता ॥

It may be noted that the *Bhagavadgītā* is esteemed as a *Yoga-Śāstra* and as one revealing the means for *Mokṣa* i.e., liberation from the cycle of births and deaths.

The vast majority of human beings have much desire for worldly happiness. What is this happiness as construed by people at large ? Anything that is pleasing to the eyes, that which is pleasant to hear, anything good to the taste, anything pleasant smelling and anything pleasing to the touch, seem to make people happy. So, gratification of the senses is equated with happiness or *Sukha.* But this *Sukha* is utterly gross, superficial and transient. These earthly pleasures are defective by nature and varying with individuals, with time and prevailing circumstances. So also is the case with unhappiness. And both these happiness and unhappiness are uneven, short-lived and varied in degrees.

The supreme *Sukha* or bliss that one should have as his goal in life, is liberation from birth and death. This eternal happiness is known by different names such as *Nityānaṇdam, Paramānandam, Mokṣa* etc. The *Bhagavadgītā* and Vyāsa's *Brahmasūtras* have reduced the essence of the *Upaniṣads* and conveyed this essence to man for his spiritual upliftment and self-realisation. Scholars consider the first six chapters of the *Gītā* as revealing the importance of *Karma* or action, that the next six chapters lay stress on *Bhakti-Mārga* or the path of devotion and the last six chapters bring out the path of *Jñāna* or True Knowledge.

× × × × ×

A fundamental and basic principle of all religions, except in the case of quite a few nihilistic sects, is the faith in the existence of a Supreme Godhead. The *Bhagavadgītā* speaks of the Supreme Being as the cause for the creation and existence of the universe, as

the causative force behind the actions of all living beings and as resident within those beings. *Bhagavān* makes this clear when he tells Arjuna:—

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥

(XVIII. 61)

"*Īśvara* resides in the heart region of all beings. *Īśvara* makes those beings get engaged in actions *(Karma)* by means of His power *(Māyā)*, even as things that are. placed on a rotating *Yantra* (machine)."

At the outset, Arjuna, on seeing elders like Bhīṣma and the preceptor, Droṇa, in the ranks of the enemy army, gets sad on thinking that he will have to fight with such great men and kill them for attaining victory in the war. He expresses to the Lord that he does not wish to fight with and kill near relatives and thereby, get a kingdom even if it be the celestial kingdom. Further, with a grief-stricken heart he lays down his bow and candidly tells Kṛṣṇa that he will not fight. It may be said that with the teachings of Kṛṣṇa imparted after this stage, the *Upadeśa* of *Bhagavān* practically commences.

At the outset *Bhagavān* Kṛṣṇa clarifies to Arjuna the difference between the perishable physical body and the imperishable soul inside the physical frame of all living beings, after He indicates that the truly learned can understand this.

Says *Bhagavān*—

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।
उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥

(II. 16)

The truly learned *(Jñānīs)* have understood the determined fact that the non-existent has no existence and that which exists has no non-existence. *Bhagavatpāda* Śaṅkara has explained this clearly. All other things except the *Brahma* are but the creations of *Māyā* (illusion) and are unreal. Hence, the untrue heat, cold, happiness and grief etc., have no existence as such.

In the very next verse *Bhagavān* clarifies—

अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम्।
विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित्कर्तुमर्हति ॥

(II. 17)

"Let thou understand that which pervades through all these and the entire universe (the All-pervading Brahma) never perishes and that none does possess the power to destroy it."

Further on, the Lord explains to Arjuna and thereby to all, that death is sure in the case of that which is born and birth is also certain of that which dies and so both birth and death are inevitable.

In verses 27 and 28 of this chapter this is made abundantly clear. All things perceptible to the senses have an end and are apt to perish. Things or beings that one sees were not seen before their origination. They are seen only at a particular stage. They disappear at a later stage. For instance, in a dream, a person beholds certain persons or things while he is dreaming. They have not been seen by him before the dream and they will cease to be as soon as he wakes up after the dream. Even like this is the feeling of grief on the part of Arjuna in having to kill relatives and friends who were not existing before their birth and who would not exist after their death.

In the third chapter of the *Gītā, Bhagavān* explains the worldly nature of beings engaged in action *(Karma)*. The Lord says that, verily, none remains inactive (without doing some *Karma*), even for a second, as all are compulsorily led to actions by the characteristics of *Prakṛti* (worldly nature). Man has the right to do his duty but has no claim for the fruits of duty at any time. He must not wish to be inactive without doing the duties, prescribed. The Lord further states that performing one's duties in the proper manner is *Yoga*—"योगः कर्मसु कौशलम्".

The doctrine of *Niṣkāma Karma* , meaning deliberately wished for and discharged action is enunciated by Lord Kṛṣṇa as that in *Karma* leading to freedom and fulfilment alone lies one's right. No person desires earnestly and really to cast away his mortal life barring perhaps, those in mental disorder and persons in a

desperate situation. What the Lord says can be summed up as that "man must not make himself to be merely the cause for producing some fruitful work."

× × × × ×

The Lord summarises devotion to God, saying that constant meditation upon Me, the Supreme one, continued worship of the Supreme by thought, word and deed (by mind, tongue and limbs) enables the person who is engaged in these, to get united with the Supreme. *Bhagavān* further assures the attainment of spiritual bliss and takes care of such a person from being born again.

After having a clear vision of *Bhagavān's Viśvarūpa*—the Supreme manifestation—Arjuna understands that all living beings, celestials, heavenly bodies, nay the entire universe are only tiny atoms submerged in that limitless expanse of *Bhagavān's Viśvarūpa*. Man must get it clear that his existence is because of the Supreme One, he must consider himself as the bond slave of God, and ever remain thinking of God.

Bhagavān has laid down the characteristics of a good *Bhakta* (devotee) in the song celestial, very clearly—"One who is devoid of pleasure, hatred, grief, and desire, one who is not attached to anything good or bad, is dear to Me. One who is in an even state of mind with regard to friend or foe, to respect or disrespect, to cold or heat, to happiness or distress, one who is unattached to anything, one who is not affected when he is praised or blamed, one who has controlled speaking, one who is content with whatever he gets, one whose devotion to God is steadfast, is very dear to me."

× × × × ×

As already mentioned, the last six chapters of the *Bhagavadgītā* are considered as *Bhagavān's* exposition of what constitutes *Jñāna* (true or real Knowledge). The second verse (first according to some recensions) of the XIII chapter runs thus:—

इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।
एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः ॥

(XIII.2)

"Oh, Son of Kuntī: The physical body is called *Kṣetra* (the field). He who deems this as himself (or his) is known as *Kṣetrajña* (as one who knows the Kṣetra) by those who know it. According to Śaṅkarācārya's comments on this verse, he who understands either by his own intellect or by teachings of others, the real nature and character of the physical body with its organs and limbs from head to foot, is called *Kṣetrajna*, by those who have a clear knowledge of *Kṣetra* and *Kṣetrajña*.

Knowledge of the Self by gradual renunciation and realisation of the Self as only the reflection of the Supreme *Brahma* must be attempted by human beings. Even while teaching about the attainment of *Jñāna*, *Bhagavān* says to Arjuna that "Righteous actions such as the performance of Vedic sacrifices, giving of charitable gifts, and *Tapas* (performance of penance) are not to be abandoned. They must be performed. These three acts cause mental purity in the case of discerning wise persons." Earlier, the Lord hath said that *Karma* (action) will by itself get burnt even as burning fire consumes logs of firewood, when true knowledge is attained by one.

The darkness of ignorance will vanish as soon as an aspirant realises that he is one with the Supreme One. According to the *Gītā*, ignorance is weakness. *Bhagavān* has said that Love should be implanted in the hearts of beings casting away hatred and disgust. All knowledge is knowledge of the Self or *Ātmā* which is but the Supreme *Brahma*. All Knowledge is only *Dharma* or the right way of understanding the Absolute Truth. And, this Truth is the realisation of the Supreme One as the embodiment of ever flowing Divine Love. When, once Knowledge of the Supreme One (in whatever form) is attained by a seeker of True Knowledge, he is prone to become one with that Supreme.

Knowing the nature and manner of the existence of an object is known as *Jñāna* or knowledge without thinking of any other object except the one so known and meditating upon that one particular object is called *Niṣṭhā* (getting steeped or concentrated in). For instance, knowing about a clock and thinking about it is *Niṣṭhā* about the clock. Knowledge of *Brahma*—the Supreme One—

may be said to be similar. But it must be borne in mind that the Vedic sayings declare that the Supreme *Brahma* has no shape, no body, no sense and no vital airs. Then, how can one concentrate his thoughts on a thing which has no shape or objective form ? Shape, size etc., which we find in mundane objects are liable to change, become impure and get even destroyed. But, the shapeless, sizeless, qualityless, Supreme One is the only pure knowledge,—changeless, always pure and subtle. It is True Knowledge—Perfect and Eternal Bliss. To meditate with concentration on this formless One will be rather hard to be practised by ordinary men. Forgetting this transient world and trying under the instructions and guidance of a good preceptor may pave the way for being initiated into this concentration. When once an aspirant climbs to the peak of this *Niṣṭhā,* he becomes fused into the *Brahma.* If not in one life-time, True Knowledge can be had even after many births.

Verse 73 of the last chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā* constitutes the submission of Arjuna (to *Bhagavān* Kṛṣṇa) about the result of his experience on having heard the Lord's teachings:—

नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत ।
स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥

(XVIII. 73)

"Ignorance has vanished. I have gained Knowledge by Your grace. I have attained stability and my doubts have gone. I shall act according to your instructions."

It is abundantly clear from these concluding words of Arjuna that the teachings of a good preceptor is essential for the seeker after Knowledge of the *Ātmā* (soul). The *Bhagavadgītā,* the essence of the sayings of the *Upaniṣads* in the main, is a treasure house of True Knowledge and *Dharma.* It will be proper that at least middle-aged people and the old all over Bharat take to the study of the *Gītā* under proper teachers.

"कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ।"

Let us all pay our homage to

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the great *Jagadguru.*

The Nature of the Sanātana Dharma

—*His Holiness Jagadguru Srigobardhanamathadhisvara*

Swami Sri Bharatikrishnatirthaji Maharaja

The word *Sanātana* means *Nitya* or eternal. The term *Sanātana Dharma* is quite appropriate for the *Vaidika Dharma*. There is no word in any other language capable of expressing the sense of *Dharma*. In English we find the word 'Religion', but the sense of *Dharma* is not comprehended fully by the word 'Religion'. The word 'Religion' bears only that sense of *Dharma* which is very much limited and narrow. On the other hand, *Sanātana Dharma* is so comprehensive as it encompasses thoroughly all the objects and their fruits pertaining not only to the present life of ours but also to those of the past births and the future births as well.

In the *Śāstras*, *Dharma* has been defined as *"dhāraṇāt dharmaḥ"* i. e., *Dharma* is that which saves us from all sorts of destruction and degradation and leads us upwards. The word *Dharma* therefore does not possess a limited and narrow meaning like the word 'Religion'. For example, the *Vedas* do not rest content only with pointing out the path of attaining heavenly bliss, but they also illuminate the path of all sorts of progress and prosperity in this world also.

Meanings of Sanātana Dharma

The First Meaning—

From the point of view of grammar, the word *Sanātana Dharma* is a compound word having its first member in genetive case, i.e., '*sanātanasya dharma iti sanātana dharmaḥ*', that which is the *Dharma* of the *Sanātana* or eternal, is *Sanātana Dharma*. The sixth case-ending expresses the relation of *Sthāpya* (that which is to be placed) and *Sthāpaka* (the agent of the act of placing). In other words, just as the Christians, Mohammedans, Zoroastrians and Buddhists signify Christ, Mohammad, Zarathustra and Buddha, similarly, the *Sanātana Dharma* tells that this *Dharma* has been promulgated by the *Sanātana*, that is, the eternal reality or the Supreme Soul and not by any human being.

With the exception of *Sanātana Dharma* all other religions can be classified in two groups—(1) The religions which existed in the past but do not exist at present, (2) The religions which were not existent in the past have come to exist in present times. But the *Sanātana Dharma* cannot be included in either of these two groups, since this *Dharma* existed even before the rise of other *Dharmas* and it is existent even today. But what about its future ? In respect with this question we will have to keep in mind the natural law that whatever has been born will definitely meet its end *'yajjanyaṁ tadanityam'*. There have never been any exceptions to this rule until now, nor there shall be any ever in future. For example, when in order to protect the righteous men, to destroy the sinners and to establish the rule of *Dharma,* the Lord manifests Himself as incarnations in various forms and accomplishes His mission, He withdraws Himself. Thus even the divine incarnation of the Lord is not immune from this natural law.

The Second Meaning—

Sanātana Dharma is beginningless and endless, since it comes into existence with the beginning of the creation and lasts till its annihilation. It is *Sanātana* not because of its having been established by the Eternal God, but is in itself *Sanātana,* i. e., eternal and imperishable. This will exist till annihilation and it is not going to meet an end even after the *Pralaya* or annihilation, it rather exists even at that time in an unmanifest form. It appears again with the beginning of the next creation in order to protect people and to effect their uplift. Grammatically, this second meaning is expressed through *Karmadhāraya Samāsa,* according to which the term *Sanātana Dharma* is explained as—*'sanātana-ścāsau dharmaśca'* that is, the *Dharma* which exists eternally.

This does not mean that other *Dharmas* are false. On the contrary, we hold that all the *Dharmas* do lead men to that ultimate goal in one or other form, but being promulgated by certain individuals, they are bound also to meet an end in course of time. It is only the *Sanātana Dharma,* which impels the entire creation towards progress during the epochs of its existence, exists in a subtle form during annihilation of the universe and reappears in the next *Kalpa.*

The Third Meaning—

In the third sense also the term *Sanātana Dharma* is a *Karmadhāraya Samāsa,* but here the word *Sanātana* suggests a more special meaning than in the second explanation. The term in this sense may be thus explained—

सदा भवः सनातनः, सनातनं करोति इति सनातनयति। सनातनयतीति सनातनः। सनातनश्चासौ धर्म इति सनातनधर्मः।

"That which is always existent, is *Sanātana,* that which causes one to become *Sanātana,* is also *Sanātana.* That which is *Sanātana* and *Dharma,* is the *Sanātana Dharma.*"

It is *Sanātana* not only because it has been established by the eternal Supreme Soul, nor is it *Sanātana* only because it is intrinsically imperishable, but also because it enables its believers and followers to become *Sanātana.* This *Dharma* bestows immortality upon its followers also.

To understand this more thoroughly, we shall have to examine its position in comparison with other countries. Greece, Rome, Syria, Assyria, Persia, Babylone, Chaldia, Finisia, Egypt, Nineva, Catheda and other kingdoms which had shaken the whole world, have literally disappeared today from the earth. Power of wealth, power of men and power of armies—all was theirs, but they lacked in the power of making people *Sanātana* or immortal. This alone proved to be the cause of their complete destruction. But India possessed this power and hence it has survived till today. There is no doubt that the main cause in keeping India alive has been the *Sanātana Dharma,* which—

(1) has been established by the eternal being or the Supreme Soul (the first meaning—*'sanātanasya dharmaḥ'* the compound of sixth case-ending, meaning the *Dharma* of the *Sanātana).*

(2) which is in itself *Sanātana* (second meaning—*'sanātanaścāsau dharmaśca', Karmadhāraya* compound).

(3) which causes its followers to become *Sanātana,* eternal and imperishable. (Third meaning—*'sanātanayati iti sanātanaḥ, sanātanaścāsau dharma iti sanātanadharmaḥ').*

Now here the question arises—What is the nature of the immortality of its followers ? We will find the answer to this question in the fourth meaning of the word *Sanātana Dharma.*

The Fourth Meaning—

In this fourth meaning also, as in the third one, the word *Sanātana* has the sense of the *Karmadhāraya* compound, i.e., '*sanātanayati iti sanātanaḥ*' that *Dharma* which makes us *Sanātana* is the *Sanātana Dharma*. But here the verbal formation *Sanātanayati* will mean 'सनातनं परमात्मस्वरूपं प्रापयति इति' that *Dharma* which makes us attain the form of the Supreme Soul is the *Sanātana Dharma*. The followers of the path of this *Dharma* realize the eternally pure, awakened and liberated Supreme Soul, which is of the nature of *Sat* (existence), *Cit* (knowledge) and *Ānanda* (bliss) and finally becomes one with the Supreme Soul.

This is the real nature of the *Sanātana Dharma* following which ancient India had attained great heights. But today when it has ignored this *Dharma*, it is going to downfalls day by day. He who having forsaken the *Dharmaśāstras* acts in accordance with his sweet will, is bound to meet his downfall. It is in respect with such persons that *Bhagavān* says in the *Gītā*—

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।
न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥
तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।
ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥

(XVI. 23-24)

"He who having forsaken the rules prescribed by the *Śāstras*, acts in accordance with his desires, attains neither success, nor happiness, nor the supreme state. Therefore, the *Śāstras* are authority to be followed for what should be done and what should not be done. You are expected to do an act here having acquainted yourself with what has been prescribed in the *Śāstras*.

Manu has declared—

धर्म एव हतो हन्ति धर्मो रक्षति रक्षितः ।

"When *Dharma* is abandoned it destroys and when protected, it is a protection."

This form of the *Sanātana Dharma* is so exalted and superb that no other religion of the world can deserve a comparison with this *Dharma*.

—*Kalyana*

The Secret of Dharma

—Late Sri Jayadayal Goyandka

The secret of *Dharma* is very profound and subtle. The word is derived from the root Dhṛ to hold or sustain. Thus *Dharma* is that which holds the entire system of creation. *Bhagavān* Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the *Mahābhārata*—

धारणाद्धर्ममित्याहुर्धर्मो धारयते प्रजाः ।
यत्स्याद्धारणसंयुक्तं स धर्म इति निश्चयः ॥

(Karṇa Parva)

"*Dharma* holds and sustains; therefore, it is called *Dharma.* It is *Dharma* that holds the people together. In other words, that which has the capacity to hold and sustain is *Dharma.*"

The entire creation is held together and sustained by the all-powerful Law of the Almighty God. Practice of *Dharma,* therefore, means to recognize these laws and abide by them. *Dharma* confers blessings both here and hereafter; that is why the author of the *Vaiśeṣika-Sūtras, Maharṣi* Kaṇāda, defines *Dharma* as follows—

यतोऽभ्युदयनिःश्रेयससिद्धिः स धर्मः ।

"That which brings both earthly good as well as the supreme good in the form of salvation *(Mokṣa)* is *Dharma.*"

Just as God is eternal, even so His Law is eternal, that is why it is called *Sanātana* (eternal). All that naturally takes place in this universe, viz., creation, preservation, destruction, etc., takes place according to the laws of God, All objects of nature, such as the sun, moon, stars, earth, air, fire, ocean, etc., are held together by laws of God and are governed by them. He who obeys the divine laws, enjoys happiness in this world and finally attains salvation; while he who defies them receives a set-back, tumbles down, leads a miserable life and in the end is thrown into the abysmal depths of hell. Just as one who throws himself

athwart a running train is knocked down and smashed, while he who runs along with it or boards it, safely and easily reaches his destination, even so he who violates the principles of *Dharma* meets with destruction while he who acts in consonance with it leads a happy life in this world and ultimately succeeds in realizing God. The primary means of attaining true happiness and supreme peace, therefore, is to obey the laws of God, or *Dharma* as they are popularly called.

Among the innumerable species of life that inhabit this universe, man alone possesses the capacity to serve and maintain others and administer to their happiness. This becomes clear from an observation of man's physical constitution, intellectual capacity, skill and power of action. If we look into the question more closely, the conclusion appears irresistible that the fulfilment of human life lies in maintaining order in the world, making all other creatures happy and realizing God through disinterested performance of such acts of service. It becomes, therefore, obligatory on man to do that for which he has been created. In a word, man's duty lies in doing good to all creatures irrespective of any classification; this is the law of God, or *Dharma,* with reference to him. And he who is engaged in doing good to others, his own good is assured thereby. Therefore, the humanity of man lies in administering to the happiness and comfort of all other creatures and securing their welfare; his *Dharma* consists in this. Failure to do this or doing just the reverse of it, is *Adharma* or unrighteousness. *Adharma* leads to destruction and does incalculable harm here as well as hereafter. Keeping this very fact in view, the great saint Goswāmī Tulasīdāsa says—

परहित सरिस धर्म नहिं भाई। परपीड़ा सम नहिं अधमाई ।।

"O brother, there is no virtue equal to doing good to others, and nothing so mean as to inflict pain on others."

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa also says—"These enemies of God's creation, evil-minded, cruel and vilest among men, I repeatedly cast into demoniacal wombs, that is to say, I make them appear in the lower species of life such as dogs and swine, etc. These

deluded souls cast into demoniacal wombs birth after birth, and failing to attain Me, sink into still lower depths, or in other words, go direct to the hell.*

Contrary to this, those who devote themselves to rendering good to others, attain God. The *Gītā says—*

संनियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः ।
ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥

(XII.4)

"The *Yogī* who, restraining and subduing the senses, looks upon everything with an equal eye, and devotes himself to the good of all creatures, attains Me (God)."

From whatever standpoint we consider the question, we shall arrive at the same results. For the goal, viz., God, is the same everywhere. According to the Vedantic standpoint whatever exists, is my own self; so that an injury done to another is injury to my own self. A child mishandles a knife and cuts its finger, or takes up a live coal and scalds its palm and weeps; according to the Vedantic standpoint an injury inflicted on another is similar in effect to this. By inflicting pain on another we really inflict pain on our own self, because nothing exists beyond our self.

Whatever pleasure or pain an individual enjoys or suffers, is the result of his own actions. If we look into the question more deeply, it will become evident that when a man inflicts suffering on another, he indirectly inflicts it on himself, and when he contributes to the pleasure and happiness of another, he practically contributes to his own happiness.

The Self *(Ātmā)* is essentially one; it is due to our ignorance that it appears as many. A man sees a dream. Of the diverse objects he sees therein he identifies himself with some, while others he regards as alien to himself. Swayed by passions of love and hatred, he picks up a quarrel with the latter. From words they come to blows and the dreamer feels both pleasure and pain.

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* तानहं द्विषतः क्रूरान् संसारेषु नराधमान् ।
क्षिपाम्यजस्रमशुभानासुरीष्वेव योनिषु ॥
आसुरीं योनिमापन्ना मूढा जन्मनि जन्मनि ।
मामप्राप्यैव कौन्तेय ततो यान्त्यधमां गतिम् ॥

But on waking up he finds that he was all alone there. There was none beside him. The objects seen by him in the dream were nothing but the projections of his own mind. He himself was the enemy and it was himself whom he had assaulted. It was due to his own ignorance that he felt happy or miserable. The same thing is happening to us even in our waking consciousness. Though waking, we are buried in the slumber of ignorance. When the soul awakes from this sleep of ignorance, it comes to realize that nothing exists in the world except the infinite Self. Such is the direct experience of enlightened souls, and it is their testimony alone which is absolutely reliable and worthy of consideration. This is how the matter stands from the point of view of absolute identity of the Self. Now, let us try to understand the same thing from the point of view of duality, which is otherwise known as the standpoint of *Bhakti* (devotion).

From the point of view of devotion, all living beings are the children of one and the same God; therefore we are all brethren. He who looks upon all beings as his own brethren and seeking the welfare of all, treats them all with due consideration naturally wins the pleasure of God, and the affection and goodwill of all. He who inflicts suffering on none, how can anyone else inflict suffering on him ? There is no reason why anyone should do so. Even if through foolishness anyone should take into his head to inflict suffering on him, he will not be able to do so, because the almighty and all-merciful God is always by his side to protect him. A person who knows that obedience to the laws of the state will entitle him to reward and disobedience of the same will make him liable for punishment, will never disobey the laws of the state. A criminal can deceive the earthly Government or baffle them by hiding or absconding or even going out of the jurisdiction of the Government or can escape by telling a lie, and occasionally people evade punishment by bribing officials and contrive other means of escape; but none can evade by any of these devices the laws of God, who is all-pervading, all-powerful and all-knowing, nay, who dwells in the hearts of all and is the ruler of the whole universe. Therefore, a person who knows the glory of God as well as of His

divine laws can never violate them; all his activities naturally conform to those laws. At no time and under no circumstance can he do any harm to any object whatsoever, animate or inanimate. To harm anyone under any circumstance or by any means, is to violate the laws of God. This is what is known in popular language as injustice, unrighteousness, or sin. What has been said above represents only the superficial point of view of *Bhakti*. Analysing the matter a little more deeply, we can discover profounder truths herein. A critical examination will show that all the creatures in this wide universe are not only our brethren, but more than this: our adorable and beloved Lord Himself is seated in their hearts. It is He who is manifest in these different forms. From this point of view, to gratify these creatures is to gratify God Himself, and to inflict pain on them is to inflict pain on God. Goswāmī Tulasīdāsa gives expression to this very sentiment when he says—

"Knowing the whole world to be full of Sītā and Rāma, I offer with folded hands my obeisance to all."

"Oh Hanumān, he alone is exclusively devoted to me, who never loses sight of the fact that he is the servant, and all visible forms, animate and inanimate represent God, his beloved Lord."

"O Umā, they who are devoted to Śrī Rāma's feet, and are free from lust, pride and anger, see the whole world as full of their Lord—with whom will they quarrel ?" *

God alone is the creator, preserver and destroyer of all, it is He who is present in all as their self or *Ātmā*. The entire creation is a sport of His own *Prakṛti*. He permeates all at every time. How can one who has come to know this secret or truth about God, violate His laws ? Nay, he will lead a most peaceful life, plunged in an ocean of eternal bliss, rendering disinterested service to the all-merciful and all-loving God, the dearest and nearest of all, visualizing at every step and in every act the infinite mercy,

* सीय राममय सब जग जानी। करउँ प्रनाम जोरि जुग पानी॥ (*Mānasa* I. 7.2)

सो अनन्य जाकें असि मति न टरइ हनुमंत।
मैं सेवक सचराचर रूप स्वामि भगवंत॥ (*Ibid.* IV.3)

उमा जे राम चरन रत बिगत काम मद क्रोध।
निज प्रभुमय देखहिं जगत केहि सन करहिं बिरोध॥ (*Ibid.* VII. 112B)

unbounded love and supreme beauty of the Lord, pleasing Him with his service, and feeling himself supremely blessed on that score and deriving supreme joy from the pleasure of the Lord. His delight is centered in the delight of the Lord and he has no other craving in his heart. A man who follows this point of view, can never bear ill-will towards any creature whatsoever; on the contrary, he will treat all as his friends and thus earn the pleasure of the Lord. Describing the marks of such a devotee, the Lord Himself says—

"He who bears ill-will to none; and is friendly and compassionate to all without any motive or self-interest, who is free from worldly attachment and egoism, who looks upon pleasure and pain alike, and is forgiving, that is forgives even those who have done him a wrong, who is mentally united to Me (God) and is ever content both in the face of gain and loss, who has controlled his self and is fixed in resolve, who has dedicated his mind and intellect to Me, that devotee is dear to Me." *

If it is argued that man should offer sympathy and love only to man and that there is no harm in inflicting suffering on beasts, birds and insects in our own interests or for the sake of our comforts, we should say that this is not desirable. We invite the reader to consider this question a little more closely. Sub-human creatures like beasts, birds, insects etc., are comparatively weaker, more miserable and helpless than man. Through his intellectual power man can easily deprive them of their lives; for he has more resources than these creatures. Should we not, therefore, derive a lesson from this fact that, powerful as we are, if we have the right to tyrannize over weaker creatures, then beings more powerful than we, will similarly tyrannize over us ? If we feel miserable when persecuted by others, why should we not understand that smaller creatures feel equally miserable

* अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च।
निर्ममो निरहंकारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी॥
सन्तुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः॥

(*Gītā* XII. 13-14)

when persecuted by us ? We must always remember that as we sow today, so shall we reap tomorrow. He who tyrannizes over helpless creatures, is bound some day to be subjected to the same type of tyranny. When there is a reaction to a wrong, he who has committed the wrong is bound to suffer its consequences. We cannot say that to kill innocent beasts and birds for our own selfish interests is no wrong; for if anyone else seeks to kill us for his own selfish interests, we call it a crime and a wrong. Therefore, those who advocate and justify the killing of dumb creatures like beasts and birds should know it for certain that they will have to meet the same fate one day at the hands of others more powerful than they. One cannot say that he is the strongest of beings in every respect, and therefore invincible and that a stronger being will never appear on this earth. In this world we find a number of men and other beings who are stronger than the rest. A wrong done to others is bound to react on the wrong-doer sooner or later. Advocacy of tyranny appears before its advocate in the form of terrible death one day, when he repents for his blunder. To injure or kill poor, helpless creatures is gross tyranny. Those who do not believe in God and religion should recognize and respect this law of retribution even from the point of view of their own interest. Can it ever be justifiable for the strong to destroy the weak ? Will it be human to do so ?

There is one thing more to be borne in mind in this connection. If we look into the matter more closely, it will appear that the gratification and pleasure which men seem through ignorance to derive from killing poor, helpless, dumb beasts and birds is only momentary, whereas the gratification they can derive by preserving and maintaining them will be much more lasting. By killing, through greed of gold, a bird which excretes gold it may be possible to get a small quantity of gold from its body; but if instead of killing the bird we carefully tend it, we may continue to get an equal amount of gold everyday so long as the bird continues to live. The relative value of killing and preserving beasts and birds should be judged from this analogy. Man has been created in this world for the proper maintenance and

preservation of these creatures. If instead of this he starts killing them, who will protect them, and how will these poor creatures live ? If all men start killing them indiscriminately, and suppose we extirpate them all in this way, the pleasure we shall derive from their wholesale destruction will be enjoyed only once for all, and the gratification we derive from these poor creatures will be lost for ever. There is one more point to be considered here. If the whole animal kingdom is destroyed, human life cannot continue its existence. To say nothing of the animal kingdom, a careful examination will show that even mountains, rivers and plants, etc., all help and promote each other to the best of their ability. Aquatic creatures maintain the purity of water by swallowing its impurities; snakes and pythons maintain the purity of air by inhaling poisonous gases; while trees and plants serve all creatures by supplying them with fruits and flowers and help in bringing down the rains. In the creation of God, all creatures, whether animate or inanimate, render mutual help according to their capacity and power. Therefore, in the prosperity of all lies our prosperity, and in their destruction is involved our own destruction. Keeping all these facts in view, our saintly, far-sighted and omniscient *Ṛṣis* compiled works like the *Smṛtis,* Epics, and *Purāṇas,* based on the *Vedas,* and determined the duties of man and thus conferred infinite blessings on us. We should note their teachings with reverence and try to follow them. Taking for our guide the *Dharma* is laid down in the *Śrutis* and the *Smṛtis,* and the conduct of holy men of noble character and knowing them as helpful to the soul, that is to say,realizing through the intellect that they are ultimately conducive to our well-being, we should try to follow them in practice. That is what Manu says in his monumental work—

वेदः स्मृतिः सदाचारः स्वस्य च प्रियमात्मनः ।
एतच्चतुर्विधं प्राहुः साक्षाद्धर्मस्य लक्षणम् ॥

(II.12)

"The *Vedas,* the *Smṛtis,* the conduct of virtuous men and self-satisfaction, these are said to be the four criteria of *Dharma.*"

All the scriptures existing in the world and attributed to holy men were written with a view to the earthly as well as the lasting good of mankind. Differences of region, time, intellectual capacity, circumstances and temperament of individuals are responsible for the differences we meet with in the various religious systems, but the goal of all is practically the same,—the welfare of all both here and hereafter.

Our ancient *Rṣis* connected all the activities of man with religion simply in order that they may be pursued with faith and devotion. For all men seek their own good, and whatever is conducive to our good both here and hereafter is our duty, law or *Dharma*. The humanity, progress and supreme good of man lies in following the path of *Dharma*, and deviation from the path of *Dharma* involves his degradation and fall and brings the greatest amount of harm to him. It should always be remembered that so long as the creation of God exists, His Law of *Dharma* must invariably abide with it. Without *Dharma* none can live. However persistently one may defy the Law of God, it can never cease to exist and as a matter of fact, truth is that which is eternal. The Law of God is the only Truth. If man refuses to obey the Law, the Law does not become a dead letter; rather the man who refuses to obey it, falls and meets his doom. Even at the time of final dissolution *(Pralaya)*, when the whole creation gets dissolved into *Prakṛti* or primordial Matter, the Law of God or *Dharma* remains as it is. For the dissolution of creation into *Prakṛti*, its continuance in that latent state and its becoming manifest again—all these are governed by the divine Law. Therefore, he who realizes the truth, secret, glory and greatness of God as well as of His divine Law will naturally follow those laws, and thereby attain peace and happiness here and supreme bliss and supreme peace hereafter. Whoever has come to know the truth about these laws, will invariably follow them and the more he will know their secret. All people in this world crave for peace and happiness; but they fail to attain it, and get only sorrow and misery instead. The main cause of this is that they have no knowledge of the truth, secret, glory and greatness of God and

His divine laws. It is their ignorance about them which is responsible for their lack of faith in and inclination for them. That is why instead of following these laws they defy them, the result of which is that oppressed with suffering they continue to wander in an unending cycle of births and deaths. This cycle will never come to an end so long as they continue to defy the divine laws; therefore, it behoves every intelligent being who seeks his highest good to regard it his supreme duty to obey the Law of God or *Dharma* and follow it with the utmost care and assiduity.

Lord Keśava in the ages of *Satya, Tretā, Dwāpara* and *Kali* assumes different colours, names and forms and is worshipped in different modes. In the *Satya* age the Lord is of white complexion, has four arms, wears matted locks and is clad in barks and deerskin. He puts on the sacred thread and carries a rosary of *Rudrākṣa* and a staff and a *Kamaṇḍalu* (water-pot made of wild cocoa-nut shell). In that age men have as a matter of fact a calm mind, entertain no feeling of animosity towards anybody and are friendly towards all creatures; they look upon all with an equal eye. They propitiate the Lord by their *Tapas* (in the form of contemplation) and by their control of mind and the senses. (In the *Satya* age) the Lord is called by the names of *Haṁsa, Suparṇa, Vaikuṇṭha, Dharma, Yogeśvara, Amala, Īśvara, Puruṣa, Avyakta* and *Paramātmā.* In the age of *Tretā* the Lord is of crimson hue; He has four arms, wears a triple cord about His loins and has golden locks. He appears in the form of sacrifices as described in the three *Vedas* and wields on His person a *Sruk, Sruvā* (ladle for pouring ghee into the sacred fire) and other accessories used in the performance of sacrifices. In that age pious men who are teachers of the *Vedas* worship through the Vedic lore Lord Śrī Hari as an embodiment of all the deities. (In that age of *Tretā)* He is called by the name of Viṣṇu, *Yajña,* Pṛṣnigarbha , Sarvadeva, Urukrama, Vṛṣākapi, Jayanta and Urugāya.

—*Bhāgavata* (XI. 5. 20—26)

Meditation is the only way for attaining immortality and eternal bliss. Those who do not concentrate and meditate are slayers of *Ātmā.* They are in fact living corpses and miserable wretches. They are very poor people. They are hopeless misers indeed.

—*Swami Sivananda*

Sanātana Dharma in Gītā

—*Swami Ramsukhdas*

वरिष्ठोऽखिलधर्मेषु धर्म एव सनातनः ।
जायन्ते सर्वधर्मास्तु शाश्वतो हि सनातनः ॥

"*Sanātana Dharma* alone is the supreme among all the *Dharmas*. All *Dharmas* emanate from this *Sanātana Dharma* for it is eternal."

In this world four *Dharmas* are predominant. These are *Sanātana, Islam, Buddhism* and *Christianity*. Each one of them has a following of more than crores of people. There are several offshoots of these four *Dharmas*. Except *Sanātana Dharma* all other three *Dharmas* have their founder in an individual. The originator of Mohammeden religion is prophet Mohammad, of *Buddhism* is Gautam Buddha and that of *Christianity* is Jesus Christ. But there is no such person as founder of *Sanātana Dharma*. This is eternal and it is not originated by any particular individual . As God is eternal so is this *Dharma*. God has declared in *Gītā* that He is the embodiment of eternal *Dharma (Gītā* XIV. 27). Whenever in any age this *Dharma* is on the decline, God Himself incarnates to establish this *Dharma* on a sound footing *(Gītā* IV. 7-8). The purport is that Lord also embodies Himself only to protect and establish it on firm footing not to originate it. Arjuna also has called Lord as the protector of ageless *Dharma* (*Gītā* XI. 18). Things not having pre-existence are produced. It is called a new production. A thing already in existence is merely searched out. It is called a discovery. All the three religions namely *Islam, Buddhism* and *Christianity* are the three products of the minds of their founders whereas the *Sanātana Dharma* is a discovery by several seers and sages 'ऋषयो मन्त्रद्रष्टारः'. The sages and

seers of the eternal principles. Therefore it cannot be accepted as a religion founded by any individual. This is beginningless, eternal and infinite. All sects and *Sampradāyas* have sprung up from this very *Sanātana Dharma*. The principles leading to blessedness laid down in these sects etc., should be regarded a gift of this *Sanātana Dharma*. These principles if followed scrupulously and in a selfless spirit, lead to redemption. There is not an iota of doubt in it, for the salvation of human beings serious and deep thought is given in *Sanātana Dharma* whereas other *Dharmas* are lacking in that aspect. The fundamental of *Sanātana Dharma*, being fully scientific, lead to blessedness.

The principles and rules as enunciated in *Sanātana Dharma* are all prevalent from the beginning and are eternal. Lord Kṛṣṇa in *Gītā* has described *Karmayoga* as immortal 'इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम्' (*Gītā* IV. 1) and described the two paths—the bright and the dark also as eternal. 'शुक्लकृष्णे गती ह्येते जगतः शाश्वते मते' (*Gītā* VIII. 26). *Gītā* has designated Lord Kṛṣṇa also as eternal. 'सनातनस्त्वम्' (*Gītā* XI. 18). The embodied being is also described as eternal. 'जीवभूतः सनातनः'. (*Gītā* XV. 7). *Dharma* also has been termed as eternal 'शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य'. (*Gītā* XIV. 27). The teachings and the principles of all *Dharmas* can never be the same. They must vary outwardly but the truth to be attained is one and the same.

पहुँचे पहुँचे एक मत, अनपहुँचे मत और।
संतदास घड़ी अरठकी, ढुरे एक ही ठौर॥
जब लगि काची खीचड़ी, तब लगि खदबद होय।
संतदास सीज्यां पछे, खदबद करै न कोय॥

So long as aspirants have some sort of affinity or attachment with the body or the world, there is difference of beliefs and sectarianism but on attainment of truth, there is no such difference.

Those sectarians who are busy in grouping themselves, are not really curious for realizing the truth. They don't get any importance by creating such groupism. Such people are in all religions. Under the cover of religion they are worshippers of personality cult and encourage others to do the same, whereas

who are ardent lovers of truth, they don't encourage such groupings and sects and worship of personality cult. They are not earnest in their quest of truth. *Gītā* has given importance to the blessedness not to the groupism. In verses of *Gītā* 'नरः, मानवः, देही' such words are used. These words denote any human being to whatever caste or creed he may belong. According to the *Gītā* any human being keeping faith in his religion can attain beatitude by performing his duty selflessly. *Gītā,* though respecting *Sanātana Dharma,* does not impose upon anyone for following any particular *Dharma.* It does not come into conflict with any *Dharma.* Therefore *Gītā* is accepted as an universal scripture.

In the whole of Śrī Rāma's dominions there was none who suffered from affliction of any kind—whether of the body, or proceeding from divine or supernatural agencies or that caused by another living being. All men loved one another; each followed one's prescribed duty, conformably to the precepts of the *Vedas. Dharma* with its four pillars (viz., truth, purity—both external and internal, compassion and charity) reigned everywhere throughout the world; no one even dreamt of sin. Men and women alike were devoted to Śrī Rāma's worship and all were qualified for final beatitude. There was no premature death nor suffering of any kind; everyone was comely and sound of body. No one was destitute, afflicted or miserable; no one was stupid or devoid of auspicious marks. All were unaffectedly good, pious and virtuous; all were clever and accomplished—both men and women. Everyone recognized the merits of others and was learned and wise; nay everyone acknowledged the services and benefits received from others and there was no guileful prudence.

—*Mānasa* (VII. 21. 1—8)

Note—This is an article rendered into English from *Gītā Darpaṇa* in Hindi, Published by Gita Press, Gorakhpur (India).

Need of Divine Help for Protection of Dharma

—Late Sri Hanumanprasad Poddar

Dharma is eternal. In God's creation *Dharma* can never be wiped out. But though *Dharma* cannot be effaced, there may be a rise and fall in the number of people who follow the path of *Dharma*. When this number rises, it is called the growth of *Dharma;* and when the number falls or becomes very meagre, *Dharma* is said to have declined or come to an end. That is why protection of *Dharma* means the protection, or growth in the number of people who are devoted to *Dharma*. When there is a growth of unrighteousness in the world either through one reason or through a combination of causes, such as the spirit of the age, evil influences, evil associations or an evil system of government, opposition to *Dharma* or people devoted to *Dharma,* begins to be regarded as a sign of progress. The futile attempt to obliterate the memory of God and *Dharma* becomes then the primary object of life of the men of the world, deluded as they are by love of pleasures and devoted to a life of enjoyment. Through a perverted judgment, they no doubt do this with what they know and realize to be the best of motives. Under the circumstance it is no use opposing or instituting legal proceedings against them or attempting to bring home to them truths which can be realized only through faith and discipline. So long as there is no change in their outlook they will never give up their ways and will regard it as a sacred duty to continue their activities, either by recourse to unimpeachable methods such as the practice of austerities and renunciation etc., or through ordinary or undesirable methods such as the use of fraud, force or strategem. Under such circumstances, if there is anything which can really change their outlook, it is nothing but the practice of adoring and propitiating God, undertaken by pious and devout men. In ancient times, our venerable *Ṛṣis* very often used to take recourse to this sovereign remedy and invariably succeeded in gaining their object, Viz., re-establishment of *Dharma*.

Unrighteousness is growing by leaps and bounds in the present-day world, and the number of people who are opposed to religion is steadily on the increase. The majority of public speakers, leaders of thought and educational institutions of the present day have taken it upon themselves as a matter of duty to propagate the message of irreligion and guide men along this path. That is the reason why the spirit of *Dharma* is steadily declining or disappearing; but people seem to be growing indifferent even about propitiating God and seeking divine help, which is the only efficacious remedy for the disease, and are prone to adopt the same methods of fraud, force or strategem, in which they are no match for their adversaries. That is why their efforts do not generally meet with success. I do not mean to say that there should be no efforts for the protection and preservation of *Dharma;* nay, those who employ methods which are unimpeachable and enjoined by the *Śāstras* for the protection of *Dharma,* and are selflessly striving to the utmost of their capacity in this direction, deserve all honour and praise. Their passion for *Dharma* and the noble courage they evince in upholding the cause of *Dharma* in the present anti-religious atmosphere is exemplary in everyway and it behoves all men and women who have any love for *Dharma* to render them utmost help that they can—physical, moral and material. Through causes, such as the evil influence of the age etc., the spirit of *Adharma* (irreligion) may no doubt appear to be growing; but *Dharma* is sure to triumph in the end. Nevertheless, in my humble opinion, we cannot attain real success soon unless we propitiate God and seek divine help. *Dharma* which does not take its stand on God is no *Dharma* at all. Therefore, all lovers of *Dharma* should primarily seek divine help for the protection of *Dharma,* and should take recourse to other methods while carrying on worship of God with reverence and faith. Then alone shall we attain speedy and complete success.

Social Values in Sanātana Dharma Based on Rāmacaritamānasa

—*Dr. Budhsen Chaturvedi*

The *Rāmacaritamānasa* is an encyclopedia of *Sanātana Dharma*, its principles, philosophy and social norms. Second to only *Mahābhārata, Rāmacaritamānasa* is the only epic which embraces all aspects of Hinduism without any exception. Grierson made no exaggeration when he remarked—"It is the Bible of one hundred million people." It is rather an understatement. The number is much larger and the geographical territory vast. The proverbial saying—'यन्न भारते तन्न भारते' is equally applicable to this great epic. Nobody can fully appreciate *Sanātana Dharma* without studying this book and when a person has gone through it, there remains no occasion to consult any other scriptural book. Apart from that Tulasī embraces all metaphysical principles current prior to him. He befittingly adjusted them all under the canopy of his skilful handling and made an edifice like a philosophical architect. From the standpoint of poetic skill, it is a work of unique nature. He broke all established records of poetic standards. In the following few lines we are going to discuss some human values of universal nature characterised in *Rāmacaritamānasa*.

The *Rāmacaritamānasa* is a matrix of Hindu values. It gives in a concrete form the immortal culture of India. The ideologies, beliefs, motives, actions and reactions symbolised in the epic are applicable for all times and for all ages. They have taught to man for several centuries how life should be lived and what should be the ultimate goal of life.

The Hindu ideal has been to achieve spiritual emancipation, for which the lower is sacrificed for the sake of the higher, the individual interests are surrendered for the sake of larger and

higher interests. In the Hindu social order, the primary groups—the family, the clan and the kindred—taught to the child the fundamental values like honesty, truth, chastity, fidelity, mutual love, sympathy, respect, justice etc., which take man on the path of salvation.

The *Rāmacaritamānasa* is virtually the epitome of Hindu values. In order to have a clearer view of the value system in the *Rāmacaritamānasa* it would be proper to divide values into the following four categories—

(1) Spiritual or religious values
(2) Social or moral values
(3) Economic values and
(4) Political values

Although no strict line of demarcation can be drawn between the different types of values, yet for the sake of convenience it is supposed to be desirable. Religio-spiritual values are those which are basically concerned with spiritual upliftment and as such these values are supra-moral and transcendental, They raise us from the quagmire of materialism and instil spiritual discipline so that we may become fully conscious of our duties and responsibilities. Socio-moral values also elevate a man to spiritual level by purifying him both internally and externally through the observance of social and moral discipline. Economic values are concerned with consumption, production, exchange and distribution of weatlh, laws of appropriation of property, economic classes etc. Political values are those that lay down suitable norms of conduct for the king, the minister and all other political functionaries and institutions so that they may work for general welfare.

The age of the Rāmacaritamānasa—

The period in which Tulasīdāsa lived was full of chaos and confusion. The common man stood baffled and nonplussed to see the swift changes that were taking place during the Moghul rule. Moreover, there was no priority scale to guide people about their actions. Due to the weakening hold of norms and values, people felt a sense of insecurity and confusion. Under such conditions of

uncertainty and distress some saint poets and philosophers started the *Bhakti* movement with a view to infusing reviving blood into the drooping veins of frustrated people.

Tulasīdāsa,one of the saint philosophers of this age wrote the *Rāmacaritamānasa* in order to consolidate the divided energies of the Hindu people and to re-establish the traditional values and ideals which had been so sadly neglected. Tulasīdāsa realised that the faith in the holy scriptures and the all powerful Lord in the form of *Maryādā Puruṣottama* Śrī Rāma had to be restored if the distress of mankind was to be relieved. The poet felt that the shield of devotion could help the Hindu community to protect its ancient culture during the decadent middle ages. It was his considered opinion that the revival of faith in the traditional Hindu values could remove most of the ailments of society and establish the *Rāma Rājya* on this earth.

Social Relationships and the Rāmacaritamānasa—

The *Rāmacaritamānasa* shows the ideal of social relationships between different characters. Rāma is the repository of all that is noble and virtuous. Daśaratha and Kausalyā stand for the ideal of parental affection and self-sacrifice. Lakṣmaṇa and Bharata epitomise fraternal love; Sītā exposes the value of chastity and wifely fidelity, Sugrīva represents true friendship and Hanumān is unique in devotion and service to the master.

Obedience, respect, affection and unflinching devotion to truth are the governing values which determine the parent-child relationship.[1] Rāma renounces the throne and goes into exile for fourteen years in obedience to his father's words. Husband-wife relationship should be guided by profound regard, love and sincerity, faithfulness, courtesy and unswerving devotion to each other.[2]

1. मातु पिता गुर स्वामि निदेसू। सकल धरम धरनीधर सेसू॥

(*Mānasa* II. 305.2)

2. बृद्ध रोगबस जड़ धनहीना। अंध बधिर क्रोधी अति दीना॥
ऐसेहु पति कर किएँ अपमाना। नारि पाव जमपुर दुख नाना॥
एकइ धर्म एक ब्रत नेमा। कायँ बचन मन पति पद प्रेमा॥

(*Mānasa* III. 4.8—10)

A brother should behave his brother with tenderness and affection. He should be respectful and self sacrificing.[3] It is the duty of the elder brother to set an example of ideal behaviour and protect his younger brothers in the hour of crisis. The values in the master-servant relationship have also been suggested. A servant should completely surrender, implicitly obey and humbly dedicate his entire life at the feet of his master.[4] About the friend-friend relationship it has been suggested that there should be sincerity, love, equality and straightforwardness. A friend should provide shelter to the suppliant friend.[5]

The *Rāmacaritamānasa* also presents the values which should govern the sovereign-subject relationship. It is pointed out that the sovereign should be like a father to his subjects and look after their welfare. He should be the custodian of their person and property and protect righteous laws giving ample opportunities to the people for their spiritual development.[6]

Religio-spiritual Values and the Rāmacaritamānasa—

Grierson says—"It is the *Bible* of a hundred millions of people, and is looked upon by them as much inspiring as the *Bible* is considered by the clergyman.[7]" Rāma, the transcendental being, incarnates for the sake of the virtuous. *Dharma* is presented as a supreme value. Rāma possesses more of righteousness than physical power, and it is because of this quality that he comes out victorious. In the *Rāma Rājya, Dharma* with its four pillars (viz. truth, purity, compassion and charity) reigns everywhere throughout the world. *Dharma* is said to be the pathway to heaven *(Mokṣa)*. There is a specific mention of the *Dharma*-chariot which

3. सयन कीन्ह रघुबंसमनि पाय पलोटत भाइ ॥

(*Mānasa*. II.89)

4. सब कें प्रिय सेवक यह नीती। मोरें अधिक दास पर प्रीती ॥

(*Mānasa* VII.15.8)

5. आवत देखि सक्ति अति घोरा। प्रनतारति भंजन पन मोरा ॥

(*Mānasa* VI. 93.1)

6. साधु सुजान सुसील नृपाला। ईस अंस भव परम कृपाला ॥

(*Mānasa* I. 27.8)

7. Grierson George; *Tulasīdāsa His Mind and Art.*

includes so many spiritual values which are competent enough to conquer any enemy anywhere. The chariot of piety depicted in the *Laṅkā Kāṇḍa* constitutes such values as valour, and fortitude, truthfulness and good conduct, strength, discretion, self-control and benevolence, forgiveness, compassion and evenness of mind, adoration of God, dispassion, contentment, charity, reason, wisdom, pure and steady mind, quietude and various forms of *Yamas* and *Niyamas,* and homage to Brahmins and to one's preceptor.

Devotion is the panacea for all ills. Anger, lust, greed, pride, infatuation all evaporate into thin air by the grace of Rāma. discipline *(Vinaya),* discernment *(Viveka)* and detachment *(Vairāgya)* can bring real contentment in life. Control of senses can bring real enlightenment and social progress. If the obstacles created by *Māyā* are removed, the knot between spirit and matter can be untied. In the reign of Rāvaṇa all the good and virtuous things were uprooted which paved path of his own destruction.

Socio-moral Values in the Rāmacaritamānasa—

It is suggested that the *Varṇāśrama Dharma* should be strictly adhered to and any infringement or laxity might lead to chaotic results. Just as the king in the state or the father in the family is the final authority, in the same way the *Guru* is the real guide in social activities—whenever religious fanaticism, insatiable lust and desire for wealth develop in society, healthy development of society is surely to be retarded. On the other hand when self sacrifice, truth and sympathy become the pivot of social forces, a healthy social order is inevitably to be established.

Love should become the bedrock of social forces. Evil should not be returned for evil. One should be generous, sincere, broadminded and liberal in one's conduct.

Economic Values in the Rāmacaritamānasa—

There should be equilibrium between *Artha, Kāma* and *Dharma. Artha* and *Kāma* should be followed in the larger framework of *Dharma, Kāma* without *Dharma* degenerates into lust and *Artha* without *Dharma* leads to exploitation and misery. The economic system of Rāvaṇa crumbled to pieces because it

was based on sin, tyranny, lust and exploitation. In the *Rāma Rājya* people prospered because it was based on *Dāna* and *Dayā* the two premier pillars of *Dharma.*

Acquisition of wealth, though essential for the satisfaction of one's material needs, should be based on honest toil. Wealth should be equitably distributed. *Dāna*—one of the pillars of *Dharma*—removes economic imbalance in society and develops harmonious relations between man and man. Blessed is the wealth which is used for public welfare.

Political Values in the Rāmacaritamānasa—

In the *Rāmacaritamānasa* it is specifically brought out that the state should work on democratic principles and follow the injunctions laid down in the *Vedas* and the *Śāstras*. The king, the minister, and the *Sabhā* should pass just laws and work for the moral upliftment of the people. The king should be magnanimous, affectionate sympathetic and virtuous. *Sāma, Dāna, Daṇḍa* and *Bheda* should be the four political values to deal with an opponent.

Wars should be fought strictly according to rules. An enemy should be dealt with sympathetically. One should not show one's back on the battle-field. No state should be attacked without any rhyme or reason. A refugee who seeks shelter should not be killed but protected. Patriotism acts as a cementing value which binds all men and women into one fold. *Rāma Rājya* could be established on this earth if the ruler adhered to righteous administration, wise legislation and dispassionate judgment.

The message of the epic is immortal. It is for all times and for all situations. Even in the present age of scientific and technological advancement it can do a lot in removing distraction. It can infuse faith in the modern frustrated man and make his life really happy and peaceful.

Sanātana Dharma Versus Humanity

—Prof. Bhuvaneshwar Prasad Verma 'Kamal'

Dharma is a word which signifies a lot of ideas and meanings in its fold. Originally it takes its derivation from the root 'धृ' with 'मन्' suffix attached to it, meaning thereby that by which the world is held (ध्रियते लोकः अनेन इति धर्मः) or that which is held by others (ध्रियते यः स धर्मः) etc.

The word *Dharma* is used in various senses in different contexts. Sometimes it signifies religion while on other occasions it takes the meaning of duty (कर्त्तव्य). Generally the word religion (meaning धर्म) is used when we say that we belong to *Hindu Dharma* or *Islam Dharma* etc. But when we talk of the *Dharma* of a student (छात्र धर्म), or the *Dharma* of a father, son or wife, it takes the sense of their duties (कर्त्तव्य) and not religion. Religion is indicative of sectarian views also. When we say about *Vaiṣṇava Dharma* or *Śaiva Dharma* the word *Dharma* used therein indicates about a sect of Hindu religion, and not religion as a whole.

Dharma on the other hand, is associated with many aspects of human life. There is the *Dharma* of an individual, *Dharma* of a family, *Dharma* of a society, *Dharma* of a caste or sect, *Dharma* of a nation, *Dharma* of a king, *Dharma* of an age (युग धर्म), *Dharma* of a human being and last but not the least, an emergency *Dharma* (आपद्धर्म). For all such purposes *Dharma* is defined in different ways and it signifies different meanings in different contexts.

As a matter of fact, the word *Dharma* is attached with a lot of meanings and purposes behind it. It signifies *Karma* (action), duty, character, good conduct, purity of mind, honesty, truthfulness, kindness, forgiveness, doing good to others, morality and all other good qualities of a human being. Keeping in view all these attributes, in our age-old *Smṛti* Manu Mahārāja defined *Dharma* as follows—

वेदः स्मृतिः सदाचारः स्वस्य च प्रियमात्मनः ।
एतच्चतुर्विधं प्राहुः साक्षाद्धर्मस्य लक्षणम् ॥

(II. 12)

"The *Vedas, Smṛtis,* good conduct and that which is agreeable to one's ownself are the four characteristics of *Dharma.*"

Thus *Dharma* is a very broad term which implies in its fold all the essential qualities of a human being. In the following *Śloka* almost all such qualities, ten in number, have been attributed to *Dharma.*

धृतिः क्षमा दमोऽस्तेयं शौचमिन्द्रियनिग्रहः ।
धीर्विद्या सत्यमक्रोधो दशकं धर्म लक्षणम् ॥

(Manu. VI. 92)

"Patience, forgiveness, restraint, unstealing, purity, control over sense-organs, talent, knowledge, truthfulness and absense of anger are the ten characteristics of *Dharma.*"

Some of the *Ācāryas,* saints and *Ṛṣis,* have however, laid emphasis on only one aspect of such human traits and identified *Dharma* with that very trait. As for example, it has been said—'नहि सत्यात् परो धर्मः' (there is no *Dharma* greater than truthfulness), 'अहिंसा परमोधर्मः' (not to hurt or kill any being is the best *Dharma),* 'परहित सरिस धरम नहिं भाई' (there is no *Dharma,* like doing good to others), 'सेवा धर्मो परमधर्मः' (to do service to others is the best *Dharma)* etc. It goes without saying that if we actually practise only one aspect of such *Dharma,* we may attain the goal of human life. Satya Hariścandra embibed only truthfulness in his character and became immortal. Gautama Buddha and Lord Mahāvīra simply emphasised upon *Ahiṁsā* and attained *Nirvāṇa,* Dadhīci and Rājā Śivi gave up their life for the good of others (परहित) and are revered to-day by all. Jesus Christ rules over the heart of a vast mass of human population due to his forgiveness (क्षमा).

In *Bhagavadgītā* the word *Dharma* has been used in various senses in different contexts. When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that He incarnates in all the ages to establish *Dharma* (धर्म संस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे)' he means thereby all the good aspects and virtues of human life. But where it has been said—"Where there is *Dharma* there is victory" (यतो धर्मस्ततो जयः), it means righteousness. When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa says—'सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज' (giving up all the *Dharmas* come to

my shelter alone), He means thereby all the worldly affiliations and functions of sense-organs. In the term 'धर्म क्षेत्र' and 'धर्मयुद्ध' the word *Dharma* is used in the sense of right or *truth*. Where it has been said—death is preferable while performing one's own *Dharma* 'स्व धर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः' (it means duties and obligations).

Thus we see that it is very difficult to define the term *Dharma* in specific words. The word *Sanātana* means that which is coming from time immemorial or that which is of permanent nature or eternal. In this context, the *Sanātana Dharma* bears the meaning of qualities which are of permanent nature, eternal and inherent. Corollarily, that which changes from time to time is not *Sanātana Dharma*. Thus the *Dharma* of fire is to impart heat and light, the *Dharma* of ice is to be cool, the *Dharma* of water is fluidity and so on. These qualities are of permanent nature. They do not change from time to time. In this sense the *Dharma* of a human being (मानव) is humanity (मानवता) and the word humanity comprises of all the good qualities like—kindness, forgiveness, truthfulness, honesty, purity etc. As these are all eternal qualities (सनातन धर्म) of a human being, he is expected to live a life of humanity (मानवता) which leads to divinity.

If a man is bereft of all or any of the good qualities (सनातन धर्म) enumerated above and has become sinful (पापी) and full of vices (अधर्मी), this means that he has obtained all those disqualifications due to bad *Saṁskāras* (संस्कार) or bad association. Water may give up its eternal quality (सनातन धर्म), fluidity (तरलता) and change hard into ice or become gaseous by evaporation only for a shortwhile due to the bad association (कुसंगति) of cold or hot weather. But after all water is water and water is fluid. It cannot give up its eternal quality (fluidity) for ever. Similarly a man may pick up bad habits due to his bad *Saṁskāras* and bad company and become cruel untruthful, dishonest, thief, dacoit, murderer etc., instead of being kind, truthful, honest and benevolent. But after all man is man and his eternal quality (सनातन धर्म) is humanity (मानवता). As *Hindu Dharma* comprises of all the good aspects of human life, it is called *Sanātana Dharma*, because transitory *Dharma* may change but *Sanātana Dharma* is eternal and remains as it is for ever.

Sanātana Dharma—The Art of Holistic Living

(The Religion of the Hindus in the Light of Science)

—Shastri Chandrasekhar

Sanātana Dharma is considered as the religion of the Hindus. As Hinduism it is listed with Christianity, Islam and Buddhism as one of the important religions of to-day. The word *Dharma* is translated into English as 'religion' but the contents of both differ much. The word religion is derived from the Latin word "religare" which means "to bind together". *Dharma* is a *Saṁskṛta* word from the root 'धृ' meaning of which is "that which sustains"—*Dharati Viśvamiti Dharmaḥ*. What holds this universe and sustains life on earth are the laws of Nature. Therefore *Sanātana Dharma* is not only the scientific study of life but also an attempt to discover the secret of living so as to be in tune with Nature. The word *Sanātana* means ancient as well as eternal. The ancient *Dharma* followed by the Hindus is called *Sanātana* for it is for all times to come like the laws of science. While science deals with the physical manifestations only *Sanātana Dharma* includes the metaphysical aspect also. The binding force of a religion is from outside rooted in the social structure and morality. The source of *Dharma* lies within the spiritual vision of the individual.

Every religion provides a code of conducts with certain religious duties that bind people together. The social pattern changes with time as a result of which the regidity and imposed bindings of a religion harden life and suffocate it. As such religions appear and disappear in time. *Sanātana Dharma* even after thousands of years is still in flux, flowering in time taking newer shapes. This aspect of Hinduism has perplexed Westerners. They see every religion has got one founder who has shown a path of a fixed discipline to One God. In Hinduism they find there are believers

You can

of God as well as non-believers. Amongst believers some worship one God while others more than one. There are worshippers of *Nirākāra* (Formless), of *Sākāra* (Idol), of *Pratīka* (Symbols) and of *Prakṛti* (Nature). In fact *Sanātana Dharma* is a bundle of religions created in time to fulfil the social and psychological needs of the people who came together and evolved in spite of their racial differences. Thus we find in the flow of time religions impose bindings upon us while *Sanātana Dharma* liberates us to enjoy life in its fullness and freedom so as to be one with the Eternal.

Religion is as old as human civilisation. All the major religions of the world are the gift of Asia. Ancient civilisations flourished in the land of Seven Seas-Aral, Caspian, Black, Mediterranean, Red, Persian and Arabian. The religions of the by-gone days whether of Egypt or Mesapotamia vanished with the change of time leaving nothing but ruins that are Archiologically rich. Similarly the mythology of Rome or Greece is no more a part of daily life of the people. The only old religion of West Asia that has survived is that of the Jews. Then came Christianity and Islam on the scene. Though the Muslims accept Hazarat Īsā of the Christians and Hazarat Mūsā of the Jews yet throughout history there have been crusades and *jehāds* against each other and the so-called "Holy" war continues even to-day. There was a time when the Jews were driven out of their homeland. Many came and settled in India. Similarly *Pārasīs* also came here and are a part of Indian life. To-day the followers of Zarathustra are no more in their homeland—Iran. The German flag of the Nazis who butchered the Jews during the second world war, shows *Swastika* and that of the Jews, two triangles interlaced to form a six pointed star. The symbol of the Muslims is the cresent (moon) and of the Christians, a five pointed Xmas star. In Hinduism all these symbols alongwith many others are used in religious ceremonies even to-day. The cresent is seen at Puri on the flag of Jagannātha, the Lord of the world. The other religions like Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism are of Indian origin. *Sanātana Dharma* has maintained the unity and harmoney amongst all.

Thus Hinduism, the contemporary of Egyptian and Mesapotamian religions still survives and its mythology is a part of everyday life of the Hindus even now.

Sanātana Dharma is the attitude of the people of India towards life as a whole. Its growth can be compared with that of a child. In the early stage the child is struck with a sense of wonder when he comes in contact with Nature. His perceptions are pure and expressions, simple. First the learning is oral based on hearing. Later his living depends much on memory. When mature, then such threads are collected from the past and spread out into the future, to unfold the path of love—pure and simple. As a man is known by the memories that are held in his consciousness, the same is true of a nation particularly of Hindustan, the cultural and spiritual heritage of which is vast as well as deep. The earliest scriptures of the Aryans are *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads* known as *Śruti*. This period of thousands of years of deep meditation and inquiry into *Brahma* the source and force of the universe, is followed by another long period when memory played an important part not only in finding out the secret of life but also in formulating such a path of living that is for the well being of all. These later scriptures are collectively known as *Smṛtis*. A time came when it became difficult to memorise the immence knowledge thus accumulated in time on all the different aspects of life known and unknown, then *Sūtras* or Aphorisms were collected from all the scriptures so as to be in touch with the thinking of the ancient seers and sages in its totality. Those visionaries of the by-gone days proved themselves to be true realists. They through *Śrutis*, *Smrtis* and *Sūtras* evolved *Sanātana Dharma* not only to work out a pattern of living in the ever changing time but also to have an eternal attitude towards life that is holistic. Working out a pattern of living at different periods of history gave rise to various religions but the attitude towards life and its total preservation evolved *Sanātana Dharma*. Thus *Sanātana Dharma* passes through all the religions that developed from the beginning of the civilisation to this day, such as *Vedic*, *Brahmanic*, *Jainism*, *Buddhism*, *Paurāṇika*, *Smārta*, *Śaiva*, *Vaiṣṇava*, *Śākta*, *Tāntrika*, *Sikhism*, *Sūfism* etc.

Ṛgveda is the most ancient scripture on record. *Upaniṣads* are highly admired by all particularly by German philosophers. *Rāmāyaṇa* is the first epic of the world and *Mahābhārata,* the most voluminous book that contains all the legends of ancient India including the famous *Gītā*. *Purāṇas* are matchless as they expose *Sanātana Dharma* describing the geographical and historical records of its homeland. *Brahma-Sūtra* gave the *Advaita* philosophy of Non-dualism which is now drawing the attention of the Physicists of to-day and in the highly developed technological age, the *Yoga* is gaining importance in the West. Instead of quoting from these religious books or from writings of learned scholars about Hinduism let me look back and search my memories to find out the age old foundation of *Sanātana Dharma*. The seal of the Indian Government bears the words "*satyameva jayate*"—(only Truth survives). The monogram of the International Theosophical Society shows another ancient saying—"*satyānnāsti parodharmaḥ*" (there is no religion higher than Truth). Guru Nānaka emphasised—there is no religion other than truthful living. *Sanātana Dharma* shows the path of truthful living in spite of the fact that the technological progress and the Western way of thinking has considerably changed the daily life of a Hindu during the past seven decades.

First let us have a glimpse of the geography and the history of this land of *Sanātana Dharma,* known as India that is Bharata, but the name Hindustana is more significant. In the North, this sub-continent is surrounded by the *Himālayas,* the highest mountain range of the world and in the South, by the Hinda Mahāsāgara, the vast ocean that stretches as far as Antarctica and is the only ocean to be known by the name of a country. This land is rich in every respect and has worked as an experimental crusible in the hands of Nature so as to create a race of super human beings out of all those races that were poured into it at different times. Rājā Ravi Vermā's famous painting of *Matsyāvatāra,* the Fish Incarnation shows four babies in the four hands of Viṣṇu, the Preserver and the Protector of life. According to science human beings belong to three major races. The fourth baby in the

painting points out to be the Indian race that was created out of the other three. In the pre-historic times the Negroids were the first to enter this crusible. They came from Africa along the sea coast and got spread as far as Australia. Later from North East came the Mongoloids along the Brahmaputra Valley. Both these races flourished for a long time with their primitive religions. The history of *Sanātana Dharma* started when a race that called itself Aryan entered the crusible from the North-West through the Khaiber Valley and settled in *Sapta Sindhu* on the bank of river Sarasvatī now extinct. They came from the North Pole to the land that had come from the South Pole. They belonged to the third major race called Caucasion. It was here arround the Caspian sea *(Kaśyapa Sāgara)* and Ajarbijan *(Āryavīryavān)* they had stopped for a long time before migrating to different places. The Aryans who came to India faced not only in the West (Harappa) and in the East (Magadha) but also in the far South *(Draviḍa)* civilizations that were well developed. In their effort of Aryanization they unfolded *Sanātana Dharma* of the brown skinned Indians created in this crusible called India by the unification of the black, the yellow and the white coloured races of the Homo sapiens. During the recorded history several subraces from the Greeks to the Mogals were poured into this crusible to strengthen the people of India and to unfold a religion of universal appeal. In fact it is the essence of all the religions that appeared in time and is called *Sanātana Dharma.*

Sanātana Dharma or Hinduism is a religion that lives and loves unity at all levels of existence. The geographical unity of India maintained by the enclosed land became the basis of our cultural unity. Rice is our major crop. When a traveller from Kashmir or Bengal goes to Gujarat or Kerala feels homely when rice is served to him. Rice became a major factor of unity. We linked ourselves with our Gods by worshipping them with *Akṣata* (unbroken rice) and with our ancestors by offering them *Piṇḍa* (cooked rice-balls). Serving *Bhāta* (cooked rice) and eating it together not only linked the members of a family but of a community also. A bridegroom was accepted into a family only

after the *Bhāta* ceremony. Every community has its own rules of eating *Bhāta* together and whosoever failed to observe them was ex-communicated. This kept the unity within the communities. And to keep the unity of the motherland the *Bhāta* bindings were broken down by all the communities to accept the *Bhāta* of Lord Jagannātha at Puri. Seeing this a Muslim saint said—"*hinduon ke nātha to hamārā kucha dāvā nahīn, jagat ke nātha to hamārī sudha lījiye.*" The modern way of thinking and living has broken down many such customs and rituals that maintained the unity of the country. In spite of birthday cakes and bread-butter civilization on the increase still rice is used during *Pūjā* and in many social ceremonies and religious festivals. Parched rice is thrown over the corpse to point-out that the life has ceased. Worship of germinating corn during *Navarātra* indicates our love for life and its creativeness.

Throughout history the ever-changing political divisions of the country remained subdued by its cultural unity. Coconut that grows along the sea coast of Hinda Mahāsāgara is offered to Gods in the Northern temples while the Deities in the South are decorated with *Rudrākṣa* that grows in Himālaya. A pilgrim collects *Gaṅgājala* from Gangotri or from Haridwar and offers it to Lord Rāmeśvara at the sea-coast and collects the sea-water there and offers it to Lord Badrīnātha in the Hills. There were many such activities which people did for centuries to rise above one's regional and communal limitations and feel the unity of the land and its people. The modern politics has not only divided the country into many parts as such Hindustan, that was "*sāre jahān se acchā*" has lost its identity. Over and above this now the various regions of India that is Bhārata are doing great harm by rising against each other on questions of language etc. To get out of this situation and to work for integration we have to imbibe the spirit of *Sanātana Dharma*.

In the past to help to build this unity every religion had its share. The oldest myth is that of Śiva. In the pre-Aryan religions of the East (Bengal) He was called *Śarva*, of the West (Harappa) as

Pasūnāmpati, of the North (Hills) as *Bhava,* of the South (Draviḍa) as Śiva. The Aryans called Him Rudra. In time new unifying qualities were discovered and the differences eliminated in such a way that all these Gods of the four quarters were united into one Great God, Mahādeva. This feeling of unity within was expressed outwardly also. The *Jyotirlingas* representing the presence of Mahādeva were established from Somanātha in the West to Vaidyanātha, in the East, from Kedāranātha in the North to Rāmeśwaram in the South. Similarly the consort of Śiva became a link of our unity by the many *Śakti Pīṭhas* scattered from Hingal in Baluchistan to Kāmakhyā in Assam. Later the *Vaiṣṇava* religion played an important part to guide people to live a life of simple living and high thinking with much devotion to a personal God like Rāma or Kṛṣṇa. Thus the four quarters of this land were marked by Badrinatha, Jagannatha, Rameshwaram and Dwaraka. Even to-day the Hindus desire to visit these *Cāra Dhāmas* once in life.

The most interesting is the integration of various communities through their "Gods". Harihara, Dattātreya and *Ardhanārīśvara* were such attempts of religious integration. Whenever the unity of the land and its culture faced any danger then a new God was created appropriate to deal with the situation. There are very few temples of Murugan in the North or of Pāṇḍuraṅga in the East but the temple of Hanumān, the God of India's territorial unity, are found in every village or town. Similarly Gaṇeśa the God of our cultural unity is worshipped by all the communities before every ceremony. The members of Śiva family occupied the four corners of this land—Kālī or Mahiṣāsuramardinī in the East. Murugan or Ayyappā in the South, Gaṇapati in the West and Viśvanātha in the North and they thus kept it united.

Purāṇas played an important role in establishing a bond of friendship and harmony between different communities. An effort was made to include the Christians and the Muslims also into the main stream within the fold of *Sanātana Dharma*. *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* describes the religions of Christ and Mohammad saying that Nārāyaṇa granted freedom to Christians

and Mohammadans to follow their faith fearlessly. There is an old *Śloka* which says—May the Lord of the three worlds fulfil my desire, whom Śaivites worship as Śiva etc. All the ancient *Sampradāyas* and their Gods are mentioned in the *Śloka*. Swāmī Vivekānanda composed another *Śloka* on the same line and included Christianity, Islam and other religions that evolved later and became a part of our culture. Both the Christians and Muslims work for conversion into their faith. In the past one did with persuasion, the other with force. Hinduism does not make any such attempt to bring people into its fold. Whosoever has the spirit of *Sanātana Dharma* and accepts the unity of the land and its people is a Hindu irrespective of caste, creed and colour. Whether Vyāsa or Vālmīki of Bharata, whether Kabīra or Raidāsa of Hindustan, whether Maxmuller or Annie Besant of India, they all proved themselves as followers of *Sanātana Dharma* or Holistic living. Maxmuller never visited India but kept a picture of Banaras in his room, saying that it is the land of his spiritual birth. The *pandits of* Banaras also accepted him by sending to him, the sacred thread and *Gaṅgājala. Sanātana Dharma* neither persuades nor forces anybody to come into its fold. It willingly accepts all who follow Truth for truthful living. The question of untouchability is a social problem and it has nothing to do with Hinduism. The British Government had put boards at certain places in Nainital saying 'Indians and dogs not allowed'. If the *Brāhmaṇas* did not touch certain things and people, it has nothing to do with social untouchability. They did it with the spirit of a physician or a scientist who does not allow things or persons to be touched during the discharge of his professional duties. In fact most of the pioneers of *Sanātana Dharma* were the victims of social untouchability.

Sanātana Dharma worked for the wholeness. This is exhibited even in the *Pañcāṅga*. Religious festivals and holy days of all the communities are marked in the calander of the Hindus. This attitude of synthesis in living created an atmosphere unique in itself. Throughout the history barbarians came here flashing their swords. Soon after they got settled and their descendents never

went out from here to attack any neighbouring country. What is true of early Aryans is also true after millennia, of the Moghals. We did go to far of lands but we had *Śāstra* (scripture) in our hands and not *Śastra* (weapons). The spirit of co-operation and togetherness influenced people wherever the Indians went. There was a time when the South-East countries were called *Dvīpāntara Bharata* and the North-West countries as *Śveta Bharata*.

All this was possible because *Sanātana Dharma* laid emphasis on everlasting values. Though the Hindus are labelled as idol worshippers and the invaders broke down their temples yet the fact is that every religion worships some name or some form. Hinduism apart from this has a unique way of expressing the characteristic of the Creator, that is the ability to create. In my childhood in Almora I saw people making *Pārthiva* out of clay and after *Pūjana* the same were dissolved in water. This points out to the need of preserving the faculty of creativity. This is what man needs through out his life. In the East costly *Durgā Mūrtis* are created and after *Pūjana* they are immersed in the river or the sea. The same thing is done with the *Gaṇapati Mūrtis* in the West. However greedy the man may be yet he never thought to keep these idols and reuse them later and thus save huge expenditure. Thus the creative capacity of man was preserved. When the invaders destroyed the temple, *Sanātana Dharma* deserted them to create new ones. Considering the world as a family the Hindus of the past with a feeling of universal brotherhood and the creativeness of their hand did wonders at home as well as abroad.

The manifestation is the play of form *(Rūpa)* at the primary level and of its name *(Nāma)* at the secondary. In the changing phenamenon *Nāma-Rūpa* creates illusion. When we stick to a form or a name we become rigid and come in conflict with others. This is at the root of the so-called 'Holy Wars' of religions. In Hinduism all the forms and names are accepted in time. Hence in the search of the Timeless, Śiva or Viṣṇu are worshipped by *Sahasranāma*. *Sahasra* points to infinity. As we recognize Him by a name, it is over and the next moment He is realized in another

form. In this search, therefore the forms and names are rejected as they come. Hence the attitude is of negation—*Neti Neti*—not this; not this. Let us take love as an example. What is love ? By saying 'love is God' we only substitute another name to be defined. As we proceed to unfold love we find selfishness is not love, similarly attachment, possession, desire, passion etc., are not love. With such a negative state of mind the positive action of love flowers. Therefore *Sanātana Dharma* worships all the names and the forms that have helped to discover the Truth of life. With deep respect a Hindu worships hills and rivers, animals and plants, all living things including fossils.

Symbolically *Sanātana Dharma* is represented by lotus that grows in the muddy pond and flowers in the Golden light of the Sun. To rise above *Kāma-Krodha-Lobhādi* and to live a life full of *Satyam-Śivam-Sundaram* is the religious aim of a Hindu. For this purity at all levels of existence is necessary. During *Nitya Pūjā Vidhāna* in eight *Mantras* purity is aspired at all the *Tattvas, Tanmātrās, Kośas* etc., alongwith one's *Ātmā. Antarātmā* and *Paramātmā. Dharma* not only emphasised on personal purity but of the environment also. Being a part of Nature it is essential for the survival of mankind. *Devī Bhāgavata* clearly points out that as long as the hills are full of trees and of flowing rivers man's progeny will live happily for all times to come. To-day the so-called industrial and technological progress has created ecological imbalance and environmental pollution. There was a time when our ancestors felt purified by taking a dip in the holy Gaṅgā but to-day we are forced to purify the river that is dying because of our misdeeds. In the past the needs of life were regulated in such an order that the nature was disturbed in the least. Those seers and sages of *Dharma* took utmost care for this. For example, seeing the source and the water content of the rivers it was said—only seeing Kāverī or sipping a few drops of Narmadā water gives you the same *Puṇya* or blessings that you enjoy in taking a dip in the Gaṅgā. Thus in *Sanātana Dharma* lotus expresses the secret of relationship not only between the earth and the growing lotus but also of the flowering lotus with the Sun. Gods are seen

seated on lotus or holding it in their hands. Gradually a change has come not only outside but within ourselves also. There are no more lakes and ponds in abundance full of lotus. Gradually the land has gone dry. We now only grow roses for colour and fragrance so as to compete in flower shows.

India's contribution to the world-culture is that of non-violence. When you love, tolerance comes of its own accord and violence decreases. *Sanātana Dharma's* love for non-violence advocated by all supermen from Buddha to Gāndhī is a movement from canabolism to vegetarianism both in action and in thought. There is an interesting passage in our scripture that describes how man moved from the "head hunting" stage to "meat-eating" of smaller animals like goats. It is said—The man was sacrificed but the object of sacrifice shifted from man and entered into a horse. When the horse was sacrificed, it entered into a sheep or into a goat. Thus *Naramedha* and *Aśvamedha* were eliminated and the sheep was allowed to be used by the people of the cold climate and the goat, in the warm countries. This was accepted by the religion for the non-vegetarians because of the quick breeding of the goats. Hence they are called *Aja*—one who is as if "not born". The word *Aja* is used for Śiva also. This gives sanctity. I have seen in my childhood in Banaras goats being sacrificed in *Durgā* temple, but now its not so. Animal sacrifice is restricted in some temples as that of Kāmākhyā. During Dasera Gorakhās sacrifice Buffalos but they do not eat their meat. This is to remind them only of the killing of Mahiṣāsura. Even the goat-sacrifice and meat eating was later condemned when Mahiṣāsuramardinī was given a new form in Vaiṣṇo Devī who killed Bhairava, the *Pañca-makārī.* Thus the Mother Goddess led her followers to be vegetarians observing non-violence. One of the foreign writers on Hinduism commented that the seers and sages of the bygone days saved India from annihilation because they put ban on cow-slaughter. So the bull was worshipped by the side of the *Śivaliṅga* and the cow was held sacred and was declared *Kāmadhenu*—one who fulfills all desires. If they had not visualised the full implications and taken this step then during

severe famines the destruction of cows would have ruined this ancient civilization.

It is very difficult to define *Sanātana Dharma. dhṛtiḥ kṣamā damo'steyaṁ śaucamindriya'nigrahaḥ*.... are virtues that sustain life and became the basis of *Dharma* that leads us to a holistic living. Not only to follow *Śrutis or Smṛtis* or any other religion constitutes *Sanātana Dharma* but even to follow one's own decisions at the time of distress or *Āpaddharma* is an important part of it. You have to choose your own path at a time when religion is exploited by unscrupulous people to fulfil their selfish ends. Swāmī Rāmatīrtha said—"Don't follow a religion because it is old. Sometimes old things and ideas need to be discarded. Don't accept it because it is new. A new thing has yet not stood the test of time. Don't accept a religion because it is from a greatman. Greatmen have their own idiosyncrasy. Don't accept it because it has a vast following. The majority follows none but satan". So saying he insists that one has to examine and to experiment for himself and then only accept that which is in the interest of the whole. For this sometimes one has to go against the established norms. This is what purifies and maintains the spirit of *Dharma*. *Tripathagāminī* Gaṅgā represents this spirit of *Dharma*. Like *Vedas* Himālaya is the source and *Hinda Mahāsāgara* the ultimate end where all the rivers loose their identity and attain 'Oneness'. Gaṅgā is on the move and in her movement gets purified. The same is true of *Sanātana Dharma*. Every part of the river is sacred but the *Uttaravāhinī* Gaṅgā at Kashi is most holy. Here the river away from her normal route turns to the North. Like *Āpadharma* this stage is crusial. Hence such a turning is held holy. Similarly while on a tour of the South, with my wife I found near Srirangpattanam a place called *Paścimavāhinī*. Here the river Kāverī flowing eastward turns West and the spot is considered as sacred as Kashi.

The Indian culture is *Gaṅgā-Jamunī*, in nature. Gaṅgā represents the age old culture of the pre-historic times. On the bank of the river Yamunā during the history came many civilizations from outside and settled there. Thus the land between Delhi

(Indraprastha) and Agra (Mathura) was the seat of a new culture from time to time. At Prayaga the two rivers meet. Similarly the mixing of the new culture with the old has continued till this day. Thus Amīr Khusro, Rahīma, Rasakhāna, Dārā Śikoha and many of the *Sūfī* saints gave a new dimension to the Indian civilization. Out of all these about whom Bhāratendu said—'*Koṭika Hindu Vāriye,*' Kabīra represents the soul of Hinduism. As the digested food builds the body so the assimilated culture strengthened the land of *Sanātana Dharma*. Kashi became the centre where such new changes in culture were given sanction for acceptance. The whole of India followed what Varanasi accepted. From Buddha to Śaṅkara all *Ācāryas* of different religions came to Varanasi to give their sermon and to proclaim the message of *Dharma*.

Sanātana Dharma survived all the pressure of existence because of its capacity to maintain the balance between the changing time and the Timeless. While all the religions speak of Truth, the *Satyam,* only *Sanātana Dharma* speaks of *Ṛta* along with *Satya*. When *Vrata* or personal duties are performed rightly and lived then amidst the changes, the *Ṛta* or the world order leads us to *Satyam*—the Reality. This is the holistic living. *Yoga* and *Tantra* are the two important spiritual traditions of India. *Yoga* means perception and *Tantra,* technique. What we need in life is the use of energy in the right direction. *Tantra* provides energy and the *Yoga*, direction, Hence the need of a synthesis between the two, in which lies the secret of the transformation of the individual to establish the world order. To achieve this, *Sanātana Dharma* suggests meditation—a technique of quick adjustment for the brain to deal with the fast moving changes of life. The full potential of the brain can be made operative by awakening *Kuṇḍalinī,* the source of required energy. As *Sanātana Dharma* gives emphasis on the transformation of the individual hence full freedom is granted to all, to follow any path provided it does not harm others.

Monism believes in one God, the root of the creation. *Sanātana Dharma* differs from other religions as it is Non-dualistic in

approach. *Ṛta* and *Satya* or *Yoga* and *Tantra* are dual in nature yet both go together in manifestation. A magnet has two poles and electricity has its positive and negative charge. Hence *Sanātana Dharma* advocates, *Advaita*, the theory of Non-dualism. Let us find out what science says about the nature of light. Scientists first said—light moves by particles or photon. Later they believed in the theory of light waves. Recently the physicists discovered that light sometimes behaves as particles and at other times as waves. Thus light exhibits dual qualities. Science has no explanation. *Dharma* talks of Non-dualism at the centre of the phenomenon.

Modern Physicists like Capra and Bohm in their search have come to a turning point where they find themselves knocking at the doors of *Dharma*. They talk of "Unbroken wholeness" in which each part, in some sense contains the whole, with the whole enfolded in each of its parts. *Sanātana Dharma* spoke of "Pūrna" long long ago which was leading us to a holistic and intrinsically dynamic conception of the Universe. Science now points to the same and represents the universe symbolically in the statue of Naṭarāja. The downward left hand pointing to raised foot, represents the next step of creation and the raised right hand grants protection while the other foot represents destruction. The 'Damarū' and the 'Fire' are the two that represent the matter and the energy which in the *Advaita* state are at the root of the creation.

A Russian Scientist expressed surprise as to how the Indians realised such achievements that are being worked out by the aid of modern Technology. He commented this when he was working to find out the construction of *Śrīyantra* with the help of a computer.

At the end let me say that it was the common householder who kept the ancient spirit of *Sanātana Dharma* alive right from the time when he opened his eyes early in the morning and recited certain *Ślokas* at every step of his daily routine. First he looked at his hand and praised Saraswatī, the Goddess of learning and Lakṣmī, the Goddess of Wealth alongwith Govinda the synthesiser of sense-organs. Then he touched the earth and

begged to be excused for his movements. Thus not only the motive of achieving *Dharma-Arth-Kāma-Mokṣa* was clear but the method of realising *Varṇāśrama Dharma* was also fair. In my childhood I had seen elders in the society taking bath in a pond or under the tape reciting a *Śloka* which made them feel that they were getting purified by the water of the seven rivers of the country. They also remembered the seven sacred cities and greatmen and women of the past who lived and worked for *Sanātana Dharma*. With various *Ślokas* they reminded themselves of the holistic approach to life till it was dark and thus they retired for the day. They felt themselves indebted with *Pitṛ, Ṛṣi-Ṛṇa* and *Deva Ṛṇa*. Thus the family duties and social obligations were attended alongwith environmental responsibilities. It was a well regulated and balanced life with *Ṣoḍaśa Saṁskāras* from birth till death.

During the past half a century the western way of living and thinking has changed this picture. Politics has dominated over religion. Money and muscle power has become the controller of life. We have created problems at every level of our existence. Having lost the spirit of *Sanātana Dharma* to-day Hinduism has become a religion that is in clash with others. However acute the situation may be, there is a hope when the modern science and the ancient *Dharma* will join hands and unfold that path of living that is holistic.

The true history of India is not the records of *Rājās* and *Nabābas* but the record of what saints and sages did *Manasā-Vācā-Karmaṇā* to keep the spirit of *Dharma* against the dark forces at different epochs of time. During my student days I saw the cover of one of the annual numbers of *Kalyāṇa* which showed these saints with the Sun in the back ground. It is a long list starting from *Ṛṣis* and *Dṛśis* followed by *Munis* and *Bhikkus*, by *Saṁnyāsīs* and *Swāmīs* by *Yogīs* and *Sādhus*. These *Saṁnyāsīs* and *Sādhus* kept the balance of power in the political life and maintained the cultural unity of the country. Pṛthvīnārāyaṇa Śāha, the founder of modern Nepal was helped by *Yogīs* and *Sādhus*.

The British Army was afraid of these *Saṁnyāsīs* and their hold on the public as well as on the politics, therefore in the name of *Saṁnyāsī-Vidroha* they killed them and demolished their centres. Moreover they made them turn their face to the West. To-day we need such saints and sages who instead of making *Āśrama* in the West would become *Parivrajakas* in true sense and move throughout the country like Agastya, Paraśurāma , Buddha, Mahāvīra, Śaṅkarācārya, Gorakhanātha, Caitanya, Nānaka, Dayānanda and others who lived only to work for *Sanātana Dharma* when it faced dangerous situations. To-day we are again facing the clash of values between the Eastern culture and the Western civilization. Let the saints and sages of *Sanātana Dharma* help us to rise against the prevalent corruption and violence so as to live a life that is holy and holistic. Scientific inventions and achievements in the hands of politicians have raised wars and made people suffer. Let the religious and spiritual men take hold of science and put it in the service of the mankind. *Sanātana Dharma* can show the way.

The discoverer of atomic energy, Albert Einstein concluded his life long scientific research saying—"Science without religion is lame. The other side of this truth discloses that religion without science is blind. These two in a non-dualistic state constitute that whole or *Pūrṇa* which leads to the truthful or holistic living manifesting the world order.

The *Ṛṣis* of the *Vedas* spoke of the *Ātmika* energy of the *Pūrṇa* that leads from *Asat* to *Sat,* from darkness to light. Sorrow is darkness and happiness is light. Caught in the darkness of sorrow or *Asat* we are victims of the phenomenon of pleasure and pain, seeking the former and avoiding the later. The follower of *Dharma* going beyond this duality aspires for *Ānanda,* the joy of *Ātmā.* For this having paid homage to his ancestors during the *Pitṛpakṣa* he bursts in joy celebrating various festivals and rituals. There is not a single festival to shed tears or to lament. With dance and music, with drama and crafts the nature is enjoyed living together to realize *Saccidānanda,* the source of Light.

The evolution of life is from simple to complex form of manifestation. In the present century materialism has reached its climax. Now we stand at a turning point. Seven is a perfect number. Seven centuries ago there were no Sikhas and fourteen centuries ago, no Muslims. There were no Christians before twenty-one centuries and no Buddhists or Jains before twenty-eight centuries and so on, yet seven times seven centuries ago the mother of all the religions was there. As *Sanātana Dharma* the same has survived to link us with the original state, the Absolute.

A man is entitled only to that amount which is required for his sustenance; anyone appropriating more than that is a thief and deserves punishment. One should not prevent deer, camels, asses monkeys, rats, snakes, birds, bees, etc., from entering into the house or fields for their food, but a man should view them as if they are his own children. Verily there is little difference between these creatures and one's own sons. A householder should not alone enjoy the consequences of his *Dharma, Artha* (wealth), and *Kāma* (enjoyment of worldly pleasures). A man should enjoy whatever comes to him through the grace of gods with an eye on *Deśa* and *Kāla* (time and space). A householder must give the apportioned share of all objects that a man may enjoy to a dog, a sinner and even a *Cāṇḍāla*.

All this is verily *Brahma;* for it is sprung from it, it is absorbed in it, and moves in it; therefore one should calmly meditate. Now, man is really made up of meditation; as is his meditation in this world, so does a man become after his departure from here. He should therefore meditate thus—"He, the *Paramātmā*, consists of mind, His body is *Prāṇa* or subtle body, He is of a shining form, His purposes are true, He has all pure desires, he has all fragrant odours, He has all good tastes, He is omnipenetrative, He is devoid of the organ of speech, etc. He is undisturbed.

Hospitality in Sanātana Dharma

—*Swami Bharati Krishna Tirtha*

Our scriptures have insisted to inculcate upon the fact that all religions are fundamentally one, and they are not conflicting at all. We have no quarrel with any religion, any denomination, any sect or any sub-sect. We only quarrel with quarrelling, and that too, in the name of religion. Religion, which ought to be a unifying factor, has so often proved in actual life to be a disintegrating factor, And that is the most pathetic, the most tragic part of it. In India, it so happened that the Vedic scriptures and the other scriptures of later times have all emphasised this point, namely, that all religions are paths leading to the same God, the sincerity and purity of heart being the only criterion. India has this advantage, that its scriptures do not advocate war and other conflicts on the basis of creeds but concentrate on ethical principles. And this principle of tolerance or autonomy of religious thinking is the very foundation of *Sanātana Dharma*.

And where there is an advantege, where there is facility, it follows naturally from the ethical standpoint, that there is a greater responsibility too. Opportunities and facilities mean greater responsibility. And I feel that India has a special responsibility in the matter, not from the standpoint of passive neutrality, but from the standpoint of active co-ordination and co-operation with people of other races, and other religions.

In this connection, I would mention two instances as to how, besides having the theoretical injunctions as their heritage, the people of India, in past times, have had a historical solution which is in accordance with the injunctions which they have received as their scriptural mandates. There were the Pārasīs who left home and hearth in their own native land, ancient Persia (now called Iran), in order to enjoy the freedom of conscience in various

matters, which was denied to them there. They went from country to country on the western coast of Asia and the eastern coast of Europe and they got shelter nowhere. Finally, they came to India. And at a place in Gujarat these people landed. They came in their thousands, and when they landed, it was reported to the ruler there that thousands of foreigners were coming, and coming down from their boats, into the country. They were people strange in their dress, strange in their appearance, strange in their language, strange in their manners, strange in everything. On hearing this news, the ruler did not know at first what his duty was towards these strangers. It so happened that the then Śaṅkarācārya was camping somewhere nearabout. The Rājā ran to him and asked for advice. And the advice that was given to him was, "Entertain the strangers at the gate with the Indian law, the Vedic law, of hospitality." And he followed that advice, not merely gave the Pārasīs the shelter that they wanted, but encouraged them in every way, gave them facilities to such an extent that at the present day, from the standpoint of wealth, they are the most prosperous community in the whole of India. And even to the present day, every year, on New Year's day, when they have their celebrations, whatever other subjects they may have of importance and urgency to deal with, they always begin the proceedings with a resolution, a tribute of praise to that ruler whose kindness to them in those days was responsible for their present affluent position in the country. That is how the Pārasīs were treated by the Indians. The Pārasīs had no homeland of their own. India is their home now.

Similarly we behaved with regard to Christianity. The progress of Christianity in the Western world was slow, step by step, and at each step a mass of suffering. The evangelists underwent the same fate as the Master. St. James, and St. Peter, and St. Paul and others suffered in the same way. It was a terrific uphill struggle that Christianity had with the military might of the Roman empire of those days . And in all other countries also, they had the same experience. But, St. Thomas, one of the disciples, probably the least that remained, intellectually speaking, of them

all, brought a band of Christians to India and the then sovereign of Calicut gave them shelter. And to the present day, the Syrian Christian community in south Travancore is regarded by historians as the oldest Christian colony that was ever founded in any part of the world. They have lived peaceful lives, and they are now prosperous and one of the most advanced communities in India.

I mention these two examples to show that, along with the theoretical, the academic injunctions that we have received in the scriptures, we have also had this kind of historical precedent, a historical background. In fact, the traditions of this type have been there all the time.

At this point, a question may be raised, "What about Islam ? What about the Mussalmanas ?" It is wrongly believed that the Hindus and the Mussalmanas have been inevitably and most unhappily in conflict on the ground of religion. But the Mussalmanas in Afghanistan and other places, never came to India with the desire to settle down here as people of India. There was no kind of quarrel on a religious basis. They came as invaders. They came as conquerors. And, when the question came in that way, and they were assisted by the people ruling here at the time, it cannot be at all truly presented from the historical standpoint that they came and did not receive shelter. There was no question of shelter here at all. There was no question of anything but military conquest. And, it was as such that they were opposed. And afterwards, it so happened that gradually they gave up their connection with their original homeland from which they had come, Kandahar and other places in Afghanistan, made Delhi their own place, made India their own homeland, and afterwards there was no difficulty at all. In fact, it was always found that Mussalmana rulers had Indian governors, Indian commanders-in-chief of their own armies, and there was no trouble with regard to creed. And even in modern times, when we hear about Hindu-Moslem clashes, they are not of a religious character at all. On the contrary, they are political.

Then again it may be asked—"What about Buddhism ?" The first Śaṅkarācārya is accused of having driven out Buddhism

from India. What really happened was this. The Vedic religion which had been professed by the people, and was still paid homage to, was not being actually practised. There were aberrations, there were deviations, from the right path. There was a lot of abnormal and sub-normal behaviour and not the normal life as inculcated in the *Vedas* and Buddha came as a redeemer. He came as a reviver of the true Vedic religion, when he found that the Vedic religion had deteriorated and was in a hopeless condition. And when the same thing happened later on among the Buddha's own followers, Śrī Śaṅkara came to re-establish the Vedic religion. There was no conflict with Buddha at all. In all the various writings of the original Śaṅkarācārya, we do not find a single passage speaking ill or lightly of Buddha. On the contrary, he speaks of him as "the greatest of saints, the greatest of sages, the greatest of seers" these are the expressions used by Śaṅkarācārya towards Buddha. We regard Buddha as *Bhagavān,* as the Lord, as an incarnation of the Lord. And if you ask the Buddhists in Nepal and in other places, they will tell you that Hinduism is their own mother-religion, from which Buddhism has branched out. Similarly, in Japan, China, and in other places, when you ask questions with regard to religious matters of a metaphysical type, they will tell you that India is their religious mother-land. And there is no trouble about it at all. They—Buddhism, Jainism and many other Indian religions branched off from *Sanātana Dharma* and though they appear to be different from each other and from *Sanātana Dharma,* yet basically they are non-different.

Your religion teaches you to feel the omnipresence of God and, in spite of this, if you do not have respect and regard for Him, you are not following your religion. If only we could feel the presence of God, we would shudder at telling a lie. Our eyes will blow-out, if we look at a lady with evil intentions. We should practice in life, what we know to be good and true, according to our religion.

—*Swami Rama Tirtha*

Essence of the Sanātana Dharma

—*K. D. Bharadwaj*

God is one, and by virtue of His being omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient, has been, since times immemorial, the prime object of adoration. God is one, but various are His names which explain His individualised aspects. He is called Brahmā, the creator, Viṣṇu, the preserver, and Śiva, the destroyer. Thus, God is one in three and three in one.

The devotees instal images of personal aspects of God and His manifestations as *Avatāra* in temples which become centres of devotion and worship.

Man is not supposed to be the highest in God's creation. The Hindus believe in the existence of super-human beings also, and since they are very much higher than man spiritually, they evoke our awe and admiration.

The religious books lay stress on man's showing respect for elders. Mother and father enjoy the status of domestic deities for a son. Śrī Rāma Candra and Lakṣmaṇa have always been regarded as ideal brothers; the devotion of Sītā and Sāvitrī to their spouses is still held in very high esteem by Hindu ladies. The status of women is respectable in a Hindu's home. Manu, the famous law-giver, has clearly mentioned that deities feel happy in a home where women are respected.

The scriptures tell us to be considerate to our kith and kin not only in their life but also to remember them with gratitude even when they have passed away.

Matter is conceived to have three qualities: *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas*. *Sattva* is better than *Rajas,* and *Rajas* is better than *Tamas*. Best food is that in which *Sattva* is prominent inasmuch as it gives us longevity, health and purity of mind. Lesser in quality is that food which though tasty is not conducive to better health of body and mind; and still lesser in quality is the food which has prominence of *Tamas*. It is detrimental to physical and mental well-being.

What is said about food here is applicable to other objects also. For instance, the Peepul among the trees, the cow among the

animals, the Ganges among the rivers and the holy basil (Tulasī) among the shrubs have *Sattva* aspect predominant in them. This is why they are worshipped by all orthodox Hindus.

Each living being is, according to the *Sanātana Dharma,* a unit accommodating in itself the conscious and the unconscious. The former is called the soul *(Ātmā),* and the latter, body. Life is said to manifest itself in eighty-four lakh forms. Even small insects and also shrubs and plants have life.

The *Vaidika* tradition has it that one should aspire to live for a century of years doing good, useful work. The span of human life is divided into four parts of twenty-five years each. The first is to be dedicated for study and discipline, the second for house-hold career, the third for special service, and the fourth for a retired life of meditation.

The doctrine of Karma has ever had its sway on Indian soil. One must reap according to what one sows. Good deeds result in peace and happiness, but bad actions bring foul fruits. Each activity—be it physical or mental—has its own consequences. The soul is required to incarnate itself to exhaust the momentum of its previous actions done in the present life or in the preceding lives. Attachment with worldly objects is the prime cause of misery. A life of detachment, however, is an ideal state. Selfless work is an enviable form of worship. It gives peace of mind and also renders the heart eligible for the attainment of bliss.

The followers of *Sanātana Dharma* have full faith in the predictive science of Astrology based on Astronomy.

The *Vedas* declare: "Speak the truth, and do your duty. Respect your parents, adore your teachers, and receive your guests affectionately." Manu enjoined that *Dharma* has the following ten commandments—

(1) Be courageous, if you are in calamity.
(2) Forgive faults of others.
(3) Discipline your mind for higher values.
(4) Do not steal.
(5) Keep yourself clean.
(6) Have control over your sense-organs.
(7) Entertain pure thoughts.

(8) Add to your learning.
(9) Speak the truth.
(10) Let not anger overpower you.

The *Sanātana Dharma* is catholic in its outlook, and respects the teachings of saints. It allows people to worship God in anyway they like. All paths are supposed to lead the adherents to him. Generally speaking, the paths are four—

(1) The path of knowledge,
(2) The path of devotion,
(3) The path of action, and
(4) The path of *Yoga*.

The path of *Yoga* is a path of practice which is eightfold. *Yogic* practices are to be undertaken under the direct supervison of an efficient guide *(Guru)*. If practised in a proper way, *Yoga* gives man miraculous powers which make him happy here, and it also eventually helps him attain emancipation or *Nirvāṇa*.

Customs among Hindus vary from province to province, but the ethical and metaphysical fundamentals are the same. Festivals such as *Holī* and *Diwālī* are full of joy and gaiety; and *Sanātana Dharma* has contributed immensely to the growth of the arts such as dance, drama, music, painting architecture and iconography which, in their refined form, are really various aesthetic media to express the Reality.

We have, thus, seen that the *Sanātana Dharma* is not a religion preached by one particular person, but is a faith-based religion of traditions coming down from the ancient times. It has, therefore, accommodated in itself various paths for reaching the goal. It is very generous in outlook, and allows freedom of choosing any one of them.

The sages of the ages gone by showed us the highroads of peace and prosperity in ancient period of Indian History. Many saints re-oriented the thought in medieval age, and in modern times also several leaders of Hindu faith have striven hard to eradicate social disparity and thereby to integrate the masses into one organisation of a faith with common values of life, namely, virtue *(Dharma)*, prosperity *(Artha)*, love *(Kāma)* and emancipation *(Nirvāṇa)*.

Renunciation in Sanātana Dharma

—*R. P. Dwivedi*

We live in a queer world. The world is a blend of joys and sorrows, laughter and tears. Here many things give rise to laughter while others bring us tears. Such a peculiar nature of the world has been beautifully expressed in a famous *Saṁskṛta* verse, which tells us.

क्वचिद् वीणावादः क्वचिदपि च हाहेति रुदितम् ।
क्वचिद् रामा रम्या क्वचिदपि जराजर्जर तनुः ।।
क्वचिद् विद्वद् गोष्ठी क्वचिदपि सुरामत्त कलहः ।
न जाने संसारः किममृतमयः किं विषमयः ।।

"On one side are melodies and recital of *Vīṇā* on the other side loud wailing and weeping; on one side pretty women; on the other side broken, dilapidated bodies; on one side assembly of wise men, on the other side drunken brawls. We do not know what this world is. Is it *Amṛtaamaya* (nectarean) or venomous."

Now, the question arises: who would not like to make his life *Amṛtamaya* (अमृतमय) or conversely, who would not like to shun the *Viṣamaya* (विषमय) aspect of life ? Admittedly, every one of us would hanker after nectar (bliss) and discard venom (विष). But how to attain bliss (आनन्द) is the question. Human life on earth is surrounded by numerous contradictory forces and distractions, which perpetually pull us away into different opposite directions and we find ourselves woefully bewildered and lost in the maze of *Māyā* (delusion).

Man's life is, in fact, a long quest, an unending and arduous pilgrimage to the temple of bliss, self-realization, self-fulfilment and the attainment of God. Life on earth is therefore not an empty dream nor is it a delirium of the spirit as some would have us believe. It is a stark reality; it has a meaning and a purpose and our success lies in grasping the meaning and achieving the purpose. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* declares—

"Now verily, a man is, above all, his will. As is his will in this life, so does he become, when he departs from it. So, let him have a (lofty) purpose and his will should be fixed on attaining *Brahma*".

Condemning a purely corporeal existence without any high aim, the famous English poet Alfred Tennyson says:—

"How dull it is to pause, to make an end
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use !
As the' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little,.................................
....
Death closes all; but something are the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming man that strove with gods."
So we must be—'strong in will'
'To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield'.

Man seeks bliss, but paradoxically he tries to attain it by means and methods which enslave him and lead him astray. He is bound to the finite, the manifest, the visible and the material and thus finds himself confined within the narrow and sensuous walls of the life of flesh and blood. Such a mundane existence based on an insatiable craving for the satisfaction of desires through material possessions and worldly name and fame is, in fact, utterly futile for those who aspire for supreme spiritual reality and final emancipation, salvation or *Mokṣa* or *Nirvāṇa.* Possessiveness and lust for accumulation of 'power and pelf' are fetters which bind man down to the present fleeting life. Gurudeva Ravindra Nātha Tagore expresses this idea of unbreakable chains in the following lines of his *Gītāñjali*—

"Prisoner, tell me, who was it that bound you" ?
"It was my master," said the prisoner.

"I thought I could undo every body in the world in wealth and power, and I amassed in my own treasure-house the money due to my king. When sleep overcame me I lay upon the bed that was for my lord, and on waking up I found I was a prisoner in my own treasure-house."

"Prisoner, tell me who was it that wrought this unbreakable chain" ? "It was I," said the prisoner, "who forged this chain very carefully. I thought my invincible power would hold the world captive leaving me in a freedom undisturbed. Thus night and day I worked at the chain with huge fires and cruel hard strokes. When at last the work was done and the links were complete and unbreakable, I found that it held me in its grip."

(Gītāñjali 31)

Renunciation leads to emancipation. It is, in essence, desirelessness of and complete non-attachment to the fleeting and the finite sense-objects of the world. It is a conscious and determined effort to give up things that bind one down to the worldly objects and thus prevent him from moving towards deliverance from false bondage of ignorance, illusion and attachment. Renunciation is therefore considered *sine qua non* for spiritual growth and ultimate release from transmigration or the cycle of births and deaths.

Objects which seem to be highly gratifying and delightful and the acquisition of which entails much of our 'fret and fever' are actually neither enjoyable nor lasting. Though they appear to yield us pleasure, yet they are, in reality, a great source of pain, perdition and misery in the long run. Says Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavadgītā*—

ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते ।
आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः ॥

(V. 22)

"The pleasures which are born of sense-contacts are verily sources of pain (though appearing as enjoyable to worldly-minded people). They have a beginning and an end (they come and go) and are transitory in nature O, Arjuna. It is for this reason that a wise man does not indulge in them." And again says Lord Kṛṣṇa—

विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगाद्यत्तदग्रेऽमृतोपमम् ।
परिणामे विषमिव तत्सुखं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥

(Gītā XVIII. 38)

"The joy which is derived from the contact of the senses with their objects, though appearing like nectar in the beginning (at the time of enjoyment), proves to be harmful like poison in the end. That is why such a joy is said to be *Rājasika.*"

Unfortunately, people tend to forget that God has given us a rare gift or blessing of human body. The supreme aim of our valuable life is not wealth nor transient earthly enjoyments, nor even vain glory, but complete freedom from worldly attachments to attain God. Man forgets that life is short and death is lying in wait for us. It would suddenly pounce on us without any prior notice and seize and snatch us away from this world. Why should we then regard the accumulation of short-lived worldly wealth as the *summum bonum* of our life ? We must always remember that sooner or later man must forsake the world. However strongly we may cling to the world, death will perforce make us renounce it. The royal sage Bhartṛhari reminds us—

"A wise man should make the best efforts for his salvation while his body is in sound health, while old age is still at a distance, while the senses are unimpaired and while not much of his life has been wasted. What is the good of attempting to dig a well, when the house is already on fire ?"

It is in this context that the practice of renunciation is absolutely essential for equipoise of mind, inner peace and self-realization which is enjoined upon us in our holy text as "आत्मानं विद्धि" (know thyself).

Renunciation is therefore considered the principal means of detaching ourselves from the seemingly enjoyable sense-objects, which give rise to limitless wants in us and enthral us into this insubstantial world. The great German thinker Goete says—

"Thou shalt abstain, renounce, refrain,
Such is the everlasting song that in the ears of all men rings.
That, unrelieved, our whole life long,
Each hour in passing hoarsely sings,
Anything which we cannot renounce, binds us."

Such a great importance is attached to the true spirit of renunciation in our scriptures that the very opening verse of the

Īśopaniṣad enjoins us to use or consume world's bounties in a true spirit of renunciation, knowing fully well that the whole universe belongs to God; that we have no right to usurp to ourselves the right of ownership because doing so would be tantamount to coveting the riches that are not ours—

ईशावास्यमिदँ सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्य स्विद्धनम्॥

(*Īśāvāsyopaniṣad* 1)

"All this, whatsoever exists in the universe, is the habitation of the Lord. He alone is the Reality; wherefore renouncing the unreal (vain appearances), enjoy the Real or rejoice in Him. Do not set your heart on worldly possessions. They belong to nobody."

The paramount significance of renunciation has also been stressed, again and again, in the *Bhagavadgītā,* where Lord Kṛṣṇa defines renunciation at length and suggests practical ways to practise it in life. Says the Lord—

न हि देहभृता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्माण्यशेषतः।
यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागीत्यभिधीयते॥

(*Gītā* XVIII. 11)

"Since actions cannot be given up in their entirety by anyone possessing a body, he who renounces the fruits of his actions, is, in truth, a man of renunciation."

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः।
कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित्करोति सः॥

(*Gītā* IV. 20)

"He who, having totally given up attachment to actions and their fruits, no longer depends on the world, and is ever satisfied, does nothing at all, though fully engaged in action."

Attachment to worldly objects is a bondage that entraps us into all kinds of woes, while a judicious renunciation of such attachments leads one to complete, self-control and is a source of bliss. It is said that slavery (to sense-objects) gives us sorrow and self-control (stemming from non-attachment) gives us joy—

सर्वं परवशं दुःखं सर्वमात्मवशं सुखम्।

It is stressed, again and again, by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa that inner peace flows from renunciation—

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशिष्यते ।
ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥

(*Gītā* XII. 12)

"Knowledge is better than practice (carried on without proper insight), meditation on God is superior to knowledge, and renunciation of the fruits of actions is even superior to meditation; for peace immediately follows from renunciation."

One of the essential ingredients of true renunciation is philanthropy. Philanthropy connotes thinking well of others and doing good to them. In other words, it means selfless service to the suffering humanity at the cost of one's own comforts and conveniences. The great value of philanthropy, which exhibits itself in the initial stages of renunciation, has been enshrined in our scriptures in the letters of gold. Selfless service to men in distress and despondency is considered as the distinguishing mark of a great man—

परोपकाराय सतां विभूतयः ।

"Philanthropy is a distinguishing quality of a great man."

If we look around us, we find that philanthropy is writ large on the face of Nature. All forces of Nature exist not for themselves but for others. The sun, the moon, the air, the water and all such bounties of Nature teach us the abiding lesson of doing good to others. Rivers do not drink their own water, trees do not eat their own fruits nor does the wind blow for itself. All phenomena of Nature exist to make our life better and richer on earth.

So great is the significance of philanthropy and renunciation that giving up one's own self for the weal of others has always been the sincerest aspiration of a truly noble soul. How beautifully has this idea been expressed in the form of a devout man's wish—

न त्वहं कामये राज्यं न स्वर्गं नापुनर्भवम् ।
कामये दुःखतप्तानां प्राणिनामार्तिनाशनम् ॥

'I covet not temporal power,
Nay, nor heaven, nor even
Freedom from the cycle of life;
I pray only that those sunk in distress
From their agony be redeemed."

But since complete renunciation of all actions is not possible in human life (as enunciated by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa in verse 11 of chapter XVIII of the *Gītā)* one can live the life of a householder and can yet realize God through constant practice of renunciation. The history of our ancient land is full of the glorious tradition and shining examples of *Vairāgya* (detachment) and *Tyāga* (renunciation).

There may be many types or facets of renunciation, yet our scriptures have laid special emphasis on seven main forms of renunciation as given below—

I could do no better than reproduce *in extentio* (but in a condensed form) the substance of a thought-provoking article— 'God-realization through practice of renunciation written by Śrī Jayadayal Goyandka—

(I) Total renunciation of prohibited acts—

This consists in the non-performance, of low acts prohibited by the scriptures such as theft, adultery, falsehood, deception, fraud, oppression, violence, taking of interdicted food and wrong-doing etc., through mind, speech and the body.

(II) Renunciation of acts perfomed for the satisfaction of worldly desires—

This includes non-performance of sacrifices, charities, austerities, worship and other desire-born actions with a selfish motive for gaining objects of enjoyment e.g. wife, progeny and wealth etc., or with the object of curing diseases or removing other sufferings.

(III) Total renunciation of worldly thirst—

This includes the giving up of honour, fame, social prestige, wife, progeny, wealth and other enjoyable objects and the desire for their increase.

(IV) Total renunciation of the habit of extracting service from others with a selfish motive—

Asking for money, or demanding service from others for personal happiness, and acceptance of things and service given without one's asking for the same, or entertaining any desire in the mind for getting by any means one's self-interest served by others; all these and similar ideas of getting service from others for the satisfaction of self-interest should be renounced.

(V) Total renunciation of indolence and desire for fruit in the performance of all duties—

Whatever duties are ordained e.g. cultivation of devotion to God, worship of the celestials, service of the parents and other elders, performance of sacrifices, charities and austerities, maintenance of the house-hold through the earning of livelihood by means of works assigned according to the *Varṇāśrama* system and taking of food and drinks etc., for the body, in the performance of these, indolence and every form of desire should be renounced.

(A) Renunciation of indolence in the practice of devotion to God—

As the supreme duty of life, one should hear, reflect on, read and discourse on the virtue, glory and love of God, who is extremely compassionate, friend of all, the best of lovers, the knower of the heart, and renouncing idleness, practise constant *Japa,* together with meditation on His hallowed name.

(B) Renunciation of desire in the practice of devotion to God—

Since all enjoyments are transient , and are hindrances in the path of devotion to God, no prayer should be offered to God for obtaining any object whatsoever, nor should any desire be entertained for the removal of any trouble even when one is overtaken by it because to sacrifice life is preferable to bringing stain on the purity of *Bhakti.*

(C) Renunciation of indolence and desire in the worship of celestials—

Sincere worship to God and the celestials should be offered with enthusiasm according to the scriptures, prescribed rules and tradition without any desire for the satisfaction of worldly interest and without any indolence or laxity whatsoever.

(D) Renunciation of indolence and desire in the service of parents and elders—

Daily service to parents, elders, the preceptor and superiors should be rendered by abandoning all idleness and indolence.

(E) Renunciation of indolence and desire in the performance of sacrifices, charities, austerities and other auspicious deeds—

Renouncing personal enjoyments, the obligatory and other occasional sacrifices should be performed. One should make others happy through gifts of food, clothing, learning, medicines, wealth and service. Personal discomfort and bodily suffering should be embraced for the preservation of *Dharma*.

(F) Renunciation of indolence and desire in the performance of proper maintenance of family through earning livelihood—

Renouncing indolence and greed, one must maintain one's family by performing the duties laid down in our scriptures for respective *Varṇas* and *Āśramas*.

(G) Renunciation of indolence and desire in works for the preservation of the body—

Indolence and desire for enjoyment must be renounced for the preservation of the body through food, dress, medicines etc. Due care of the body should be taken with the sole object of God-realization.

(H) Total renunciation of the sense of meum and attachment to all worldly objects and activities—

All worldly objects, all relations and all forms of enjoyments etc., being transient and impermanent, the sense of meum and attachment to them should be renounced. Pure and exclusive love for God alone should be developed as a supreme moral duty.

(I) Total renunciation of subtle desires and egoism—

All worldly objects being the creations of *Māyā* are wholly transient and God alone is the embodiment of *Sat, Cit* and *Ānanda;* hence all egoism and subtle desires for the world including the body and its activities should be renounced. Body should not be identified with soul and the sense of doership must be eradicated.

Our great tradition has been one of austerity and *Tyāga.* We always cherish the ideal of *Vairāgya* (detachment) and adore one

who is free from all attachment, all fear and all anger (वीतराग-भयक्रोधः). Glory and glamour have never attracted our great sages and savants. Life of sacrifice for the common weal has always been the hallmark of Indian life. We have been ordained to abandon our family for the community, abandon community for the nation, abandon nation for the world and even the world for the sake of our own sacred soul: आत्मार्थे पृथिवीं त्यजेत् आत्मलाभान्नपरं विद्यते "There is nothing higher than the possession of your own soul, for the sake of which you may give up everything."

Our religious history is full of the galaxy of *Jīvanmuktas* (जीवन्मुक्त)—fully liberated souls, who attained complete renunciation in life, although possessing body and performing all essential duties. Such liberated souls (जीवन्मुक्त) sever all apparent ties with this world just as a person awakened from sleep dissociates himself completely from the world of dreams. He transcends all sorrows and attains eternal bliss. To him the world is like a momentary bubble of water or a mirage and nothing else exists except God, the embodiment of the true, the good and the beautiful (सत्यं शिवं सुन्दरम्). His saga of supreme sacrifices sets example for all to emulate. To quote *Brahma Sūtra* 'मुक्तोपसृप्यव्यपदेशात्।' (ब्रह्मसूत्र 1.3.2).

"Supreme is the goal of the released person." To cite a few instances here. Sage Dadhīci offered his bones for the victory and welfare of Gods; king Mayūradhwaja had his only son's body split into two parts to offer his flesh to the hungry lion of his recluse guest, king Śivi hacked off his flesh to feed the hawk as his guest, King Ranti Deva, after long starvation and while on the verge of death, offered his own meal to the needy beggar, Rājā Hariścandra sacrificed his all—his kingdom, wife and son to uphold the *Maryādā* (मर्यादा)—moral standards of selfless sacrifice, king Janaka—*'Videha'* who was not even conscious of his own body, what to say of other possessions, so great was his sense of detachment. Such men serve us as guiding spirits for attaining lasting peace and release from bondage.

Epilogue—

We recognize four ends of human life viz., virtue *(Dharma)*, wealth *(Artha)*, enjoyment *(Kāma)* and liberation *(Mokṣa)*. Liberation being infinite and eternal, is the highest goal of human life and hence all other ends should be so subordinated that they ultimately lead to the attainment of *Mokṣa* (liberation). Liberation presupposes bondage. Man's subjection to myriad worldly attachments not only enslaves him but also causes him much suffering and pain. It is therefore essential to discard bonds and realize the infinite potentialities of divinity inherent in us. Conscious detachment from delusion *(Māyā)*, impurities and imperfections paves way to God-realization. Swāmī Vivekānanda once said—'the soul is divine, only held in the bondage of matter; perfection will be reached when this bond will burst.......... (leading to) *Mukti*........freedom from the bonds of imperfection, freedom from death and misery.'

Renunciation is, in essence, a supremely essential moral duty of every human being, for it (renunciation) is a road to the realm of Eternal Reality or God, who pervades all existence. Renunciation, to be effective for self-fulfilment, consists not only in desirelessness and non-attachment to the false and fleeting world, but also in complete surrender of one's egoistic self—the eradication of the sense of doership and duality—to the divine will. One, who has flung away all egoistic initiative both of the inner and outer life, one who lets the divine will flow through him unimpeded by attachments, urges and impulses, is a true ascetic. Such a man is a sincere aspirant for self-sublimation and God-realization. The attainment of spiritual insight and its transmission to mankind at large depends on a life of detached retirement like that of a *Saṁnyāsī*. Such a life has been extolled by Dr. S. Rādhākṛṣṇan in the following words—

"Retirement from the world is enjoined for every Aryan when once his duties to society are fulfilled. It comes at the end of a man's career. The ascetic, whose life is to live and conduct righteousness, turns his eyes towards heaven and keeps himself free from the temptations of the world. The true *Saṁnyāsī* is he,

who, with self-control and spiritual vision, suffers for mankind. The *Saṁnyāsīs* are a spiritual brother-hood without possessions, without caste and nationality, enjoined to preach in the spirit of joy the gospel of love and service; they are the ambassadors of God on earth, witnessing to the beauty of holiness, the power of humility, the joy of poverty and the freedom of service."

The life of the liberated man is a life of self-control and self-enlightenment, of renunciation, love and service to all. Such a *Jīvanmukta* can justly proclaim, echoing the moving words of Śrī Aurobindo Ghose—

"I have escaped and the small self is dead,
I am immortal, alone, ineffable;
I have gone out from the universe I made
And have grown nameless and immeasurable."

Dharma is extremely subtle *(Ati Sūkṣma),* intricate and complex. Even sages are perplexed in determining what is *Dharma. Dharma* gives wealth, satisfaction of desires and liberation in the end. Any action that is best calculated to bring *Śreya (Mokṣa)* is *Dharma. Dharma* is so-called because it protects all.

Sadācāra or right conduct is the foundation of *Yoga. Sadācāra* consists in the practice of *Yama-Niyama.* These correspond roughly to the ten commandments of Jesus or to the noble eightfold path of Lord Buddha. Practice of *Yama-Niyama* will eradicate all impurities of the mind.

Yama means the practice of *Ahiṁsā* (abstinence from injury and killing), *Satya* (truthfulness), *Asteya* (abstinence from theft), *Brahmacarya* (continence) and *Aparigraha* (abstinence from greed). In every religion you will find these to be the foremost. Great emphasis has been laid in the *Gītā* on the practice of *Yama. Niyama* is the observance of the five canons, viz., *Śauca* (purity of body and mind), *Santoṣa* (contentment), *Tapas* (austerity), *Svādhyāya* (study of scriptures) and *Īśvara-Praṇidhāna* (meditation on God).

—*Swami Sivananda Sarasvati*

Astrology in Sanātana Dharma

The Vedic *Ṛṣis* had mastered the knowledge of astronomy and astrology ages before European civilization was born. In the Vedic age, a deep study had been made of the movements of planets and their influence on this earth in spite of the absence of modern techniques with their highly developed instruments. Every event of that age was based on a specific calculation of *Jyotiṣa Śāstra,* which is itself a part of the *Ṣaḍaṅgas*. The sages viewed astrology as a quest for verifiable knowledge.

The present inter-planetary explorations have thrown a lot of light over the surface formations of various bodies in space, such as the Moon, Mercury, Mars and Venus, and now Saturn. All this knowledge is available in Vedic texts such as the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa,* and *Ātharvaṇa Veda*. The contention of western writers that Indians received this knowledge through the Greeks, is not acceptable to the nation. Indians performed all their important events entirely on the basis of astronomy. Before, Gallileo or Newton, were Kaṇāda *Ṛṣi* and Bhāskara in India. Before any other physicist or biologist worth the name came on to the occidental scene, there were sages like Parāśara and Varāhamihira, who were immensely creative innovators. Twentieth-century scientists have discovered that there are innumerable galaxies in the universe. Those who wonder at this information would do well to refer to the above-mentioned three books. They will find that these newly discovered galaxies are described in detail in them, including the arrangement of galaxies in cosmic space. *Jyoti* actually means light, fire, one that shines. Since all the planets and stars glow in the sky, the subject of their movements and their influence on our planet was termed *Jyotiṣa* (astronomy and artrology combined).

Astronomy—

Astronomy is what we call the mathematical calculations of movements of all the planets which science has brought to light in the last four to five centuries. The Indian method of calculating

Moon

astronomical data is as old as Aryan civilization, and the preparation of *Pañcāṅgas* (almanacs) was practised thousands of years before the Christian era, as already mentioned, in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.

The Aryans had divided the elliptical arc of the horizon, the Zodiac, into twelve *Rāśis* of 30 (thirty degrees) each and into twenty-seven *Nakṣatras* (27 constellations of the moon orbit). The orbit of all the *Nakṣatras* were calculated according to definite rules, and periodic corrections were applied when necessary.

The Zodiac is a broad band or belt in the heavens, extending 9 degrees on each side of the ellipse. It is known as the *Bhūcakra* in *Saṁskṛta* and revolves on its own axis once a day from east to west.

There are seven planets *Grahas* (ग्रह) which have the most powerful influence on earth, leaving aside the shadowy planets Rāhu and Ketu, and the newly discovered planets, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. According to the theory of relativity, the Moon, being the planet nearest to earth, exercises the greatest influence on the human mind and heart. This is easily observed on any full moon. Just as there are high tides on the sea on full moon, similarly, a person, in whose horoscope the moon is exalted and is placed in the first house, becomes emotional and sentimental on the full moon day. The sun, being the source of all energy, exercises considerable influence on our personality and temperament. Where the position of the sun is exalted and powerful, the temperament and facial expression of the person is majestic and energetic.

All the planets perform double functions; they not only rotate on their own axis each day (from west to east) they also revolve around the Sun.

The Zodiac is a circle of light and, consequently, has no beginning or end. It is marked by twenty-seven constellations *(Nakṣatras)*. The first point of *Aśvinī*, the first constellation, synchronises with the first point of *Aries*, the starting point of the fixed Zodiac.

Each *Nakṣatra* or constellation measures thirteen degrees and twenty minutes of the arc, and consists of |four| quarters *(Pādas)* of three degree and twenty minutes each. Thus 2+1/4 constellations,

or nine quarters, comprise a zodiacal sign. The *Rāśis* (signs) and *Nakṣatras* (constellations) are both reckoned from the same starting point, that is the zero degree longitude of Aries.

The mathematical calculations of the movements of various planets are recorded in the *Pañcāngas* (almanacs) each year. To describe any particular time in space, five factors are considered necessary in *Jyotiṣa Śāstra.* They are—

1. Lunar date (तिथि)
2. Day of the week (वार)
3. Constellation (नक्षत्र)
4. *Yoga* (योग, conjunction)
5. *Karaṇa* (The half of a *Tithi)*

A compilation which depicts all the above five factors is known as a *Pañcānga—Pañca*=5, *Anga*=limbs.

Birth-chart of an individual indicates the position of various planets at the time of his birth. Their influence and mutual aspects are calculated and the sum total of inference is drawn when predictions are made. Hence, astrology is based on mathematical calculations and the observed effects of the planets according to empirical rules.

According to the Indian concept of time, one *Mahāyuga, Kalpa* or one cosmic cycle (*Kṛta, Tretā, Dwāpara and Kali* put together) is 12,000 times 360 or 43, 20,000 years. People used to believe that this was the result of the imagination of our ancestors. However, modern researches have proved how the ancient Hindu astrologers fixed these periods. It has now been confirmed by Major General A. W. Droyson F. R. A.S. who in a paper read before the Royal Society has proved that the duration of a *Mahāyuga,* that is 43,20,000 years, has been based on—

(1) A particular movement of the earth i.e., the daily rotation at over 1,000 miles per hour in twenty-four hours.

(2)The annual revolution aroud the sun at about 66,000 miles per hour in 365.254 days, and

(3) The motion consequent to the gravitational pull of the giant star Hercules at about 12 miles per second, as well as the time taken by each planet to come to a vertical line of mean conjunction with the first degree of Aries since they last occupied

a similar position in the same vertical line of mean conjunction at a place 76° east of the Greenwich longitude. This was the basis of the calculation. All the planets occupy the same position at the commencement of each *Mahāyuga*. Therefore, this period was fixed by arriving at the L.C.M. of the number of days taken by each planet to make one complete revolution around the Zodiac, as well as the motion of the earth referred to above. This, then, could be seen to be 43,20,000 years approximately.

The *Mahābhārata* mentions that the *Vedas* contain an account of the dimensions of the earth, sun, moon, planets, certain stars and constellations and the duration of the four *Yugas* based on systematic astronomical calculations.

Modern research scholars are of the opinion that the first treatise containing astronomical data, *Vedāṅga Jyotiṣa* was compiled about 1350 B. C.; whereas, we find a lot of precious astronomical information and data available in the *Ṛgveda,* which is accepted as much anterior to that date. A comparison of the sidereal and synodic periods of the different planets, as derived from the *Sūrya Siddhānta* on the one hand, and by modern scientific methods on the other, reveals that in most cases, they agree upto the second or third decimal places.

Previously, western astronomers said that the earth was stationary and that all the heavenly bodies moved around it, until Nicholas Coppernicus (A. D. 1473-1543) proved that all heavenly bodies revolve around the sun. However, in India, Āryabhaṭa (born 476 A. D. at Pataliputra) had, in his work *Āryabhatīyam,* described the position of the earth in the galaxy as being the cause of eclipses. This great work gives the local mean time in Rome, Java, Ujjain and places in Western hemisphere with reference to the mean time of Ceylon. It was only a few years back, with the advent of space research programme in our country, that we have opened our eyes to the greatness of the celebrated Indian astronomers and mathematicians of our own great antiquity.

Sanātana Dharma and Rearing of Cows

—*Prof. K. L. Bhalla*

Sanātana Dharma attaches a lot of importance to the rearing of cows as is evident from our scriptures. Protection of cows is a cardinal tenet of our religion. In *Mahābhārata Maharṣi* Cyawana (च्यवन) said to Nahuṣa—"I do not consider any wealth comparable to cows in this world. Cows provide good to men and 'हविष्य' to the gods. None can describe all the virtues of the cows."

The Hindus look upon cow as mother and verily she is the embodiment of many qualities. Mahārāja Dilīpa did not allow the lion to kill *Maharṣi* Vasiṣṭha's cow—Nandinī and for that he was prepared for any sacrifice. The same is true of Arjuna who accepted exile for twelve years for the safety of the cow. According to Śrī Śukadeva, *Bhagavān* Śrī Kṛṣṇa possessed all sorts of wealth because of serving cows. Ṛṣi Dayānanda, Mahātmā Gāndhī and Vinobājī pleaded strongly to serve the cows.

But the present state of affairs is deplorable. There are many slaughter houses in India where as there should have been a total ban on the killing of cow. We mostly pay lip sympathy to the cause of cows. The state of *Gośālās* is not satisfactory. Sufficient land has not been spared for the grazing of cows and the root cause is our mercenary approach. The money meant for the welfare of cows is sometime spent elsewhere.

The number of *Gośālās* at present is 2500 approximately—only a few are run efficiently. It is imperative to increase the strength of *Gośālā's* . So that cows straying on the roads are kept there. We spend so much on marriage parties and other luxuries. Can we not spare some amount for the well-being of cows ? If we cannot keep a cow in a house, we can at least help those organizations that are engaged in the service of cows. Denmark and other countries are making commendable efforts for the development of cows. The number of cows in proportion to the area of our land is less as compared to other countries and the result is the scarcity of milk.

From the earliest historical times all nations have used cow milk and its products as food. It has been seen that mankind has

a natural craving for milk and dairy products. Its importance as a food for infants is also recognized. It is a source of bodily energy and of protein. Proteins from grains and vegetables are somewhat lacking in quality and their deficiencies are best made up by the use of some animal protein. Of all animal proteins, those of milk are the best adapted for making up what is lacking in a ration largely composed of cereals. The second remarkable discovery that greatly stresses the value of milk as food is that of vitamins. Many important vitamins are found in abundance in milk. No other single food contains so many of the known vitamins as milk does. It is also a source of minerals such as lime and phosphorus.

The cow returns more human food from a given amount of feed than any other domestic animal. Morrison says—"Among all the animals of the farm, dairy cows of good productive capacity are unequalled as producers of human food." The special value of the cow as a domestic animal arises from her ability to consume and digest large quantities of hay and to convert it into milk.

"The cow and the working bullock" said Lord Linlithgow, "bear on their patient backs the entire structure of Indian agriculture." The statement puts in a nutshell the importance of cattle to India's economy. Ours is a predominantly agricultural country with about 75 percent of the population living on the income from land. The development of mechanization does not appreciably affect this important role of cattle in Indian economy. Mechanization is possible only on large holdings, the number of which is small.

In spite of the advances made in the production of synthetic fertilizers, droppings from cow will continue to be the most important source of manure for the soil. Cowdung is universally recognized as being better than synthetic products for the retention of humus in soil and for maintaining its fertility. Its practical advantages over these products consist in the fact that it can be applied readily by farmers without the necessity of soil analysis and knowledge of the soil content.

The acute shortage of energy available from traditional sources has prompted interest and research activities in the field of alternate source of energy. Potential source is biogas

(*Gobara* gas) generated through an aerobic digestion of organic waters like cattle dung and crop residues. The gas is generally used for cooking, heating and lighting. An aerobic digestion not only leads to valuable energy in the form of *Methane* but also enhances the fertilizer value of the waste. The *Gobara* gas plants are less costly and are pollution free. Farmers spray D. D. T. on their farms. It is established by Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana that the residual effect of D. D. T. spray on milk of cow is less as compared to that on milk of buffalo.

The usefulness of cow is an established fact and the cruelties perpetrated on it is also a harsh reality. In pre 1947 days there was a society in Lahore known as S.P.C.A— Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. These days when there is violence prevalent in all walks of life, to talk of showing mercy to cows and other animals looks ridiculous. But we should remember that all creatures are the children of one divine father who loveth all. We should be kind to cows who are our benefactors in every respect. Sick cows are to be properly treated. The department of Animal Husbandry and other organisations should come forward to help increase the number of cows.

In India there are about ten lacs blind persons who constitute 1/3 population of the blind men and women found all over the world. If cow is given more of green fodder and fodder containing vitamin A, we can get more of vitamin A from cow milk and the improved quality of milk will check blindness to some extent. It is a pity that children imitating their parents, take more and more of tea. In the first instance milk is not within the reach of common people because of rising prices. In houses where it is available, the young ones are averse to taking milk, the consequences can be well imagined. *Bhagavān* Śrī Kṛṣṇa is remembered as Gopāla. It is in the fitness of thing that we who are the devotees of Lord should follow in his footsteps by loving, rearing and protecting cows. *Sanātana Dharma* enjoins on us to do whatever we can for the prosperity of cows. Herein lies the progress of the country.

Varṇāśrama Vyavasthā in Sanātana Dharma
(A Solution for All Social Problems)

—*Keshavram N. Iengar*

"............Causing the distinction of things for the perfection of the whole, the same divine wisdom is also the cause of inequality. The universe would not be perfect, were there but one level of goodness."

—St. Thomas Aquinas: *Summatheologica*

Perhaps no other subject in *Sanātana Hindu Dharma*[1] calls for as much untiring explanation about its principles and manifold applications as that of the *Varṇāśrama Vyavasthā,* or the reputed caste system and no other subject could be so much misunderstood, if one fails to understand its rationale, from a derisive stand.

The first task for those with a set prejudice against a traditional social order such as the caste, is to disengage the question at issue by a clear-cut act of discernment from all accretions that human passion may have imposed upon it. Among the questions one may ask are—Are human beings, equally endowed in their physical and mental abilities ? Can everyone be fitted for any kind of work, even with the necessary training ? If the answers are in the negative, then the further question must be on what basis could one assign an individual's functions, duties and responsibilities ?

One may also ask—What the intentions are of an institution like the caste, whether those intentions are metaphysically justifiable, and whether or not the institution has succeeded in its intentions over the centuries, and finally whether the new institutions or remedies proposed are likely to realise the same

1. We use this designation advisedly to mean that what is signified by *Sanātana Dharma* is today to be understood also by the title *Hindu Dharma.*

Varna

intentions or improve on them.[2] In other words, one could apply the traditional criteria of *Tattva, Hetu (Viṣaya), Prayojana (Sambandha)* and *Adhikārī* to study the subject of *Varṇāśrama Dharma* in its total bearing.

Varṇa is derived from the *Saṁskṛta* root *Vr* to cover,[3] and *Varṇa* meaning colour in this context, is symbolically associated with the *Guṇas—Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas,* represented respectively by the colours white, red and black. *Varṇa* is not related to the colour of the skin of the incumbent, nor has it any racial implications. *Varṇa* or *Jāti* (a subdivision of *Varṇa)* is that category of human complements which the *Jīva* (individual soul) has as it were chosen, by virtue of its antecedents. *Īśvara* or the divine law-giver is the author of the categories (as He is of all creation), even the alloter of them but it is the *Jīva* itself that has merited its particular allotment *Bhagavadgītā (B. G.* IV. 13).

Varṇa is inseparable from the postulates of *Karma, Karmaphala, Vṛtti, Saṁskāra* and *Punarjanma.* All these derive from the principle of *Puruṣārtha*—the justification of the human state. It is the *Saṁskāras* (latent tendencies) and *Karma (Sañcita* and *Prārabdha Karmas)* from an individual's previous existence that projects him into a particular parentage, so that *Jāti* and *Varṇa* are pre-determined by an individual's latent *Guṇas* (qualities) and not on those that would be manifest by him after birth *(Bhagavadgītā* IV. 13; XVIII. 41).[4] The ordination of the *Sanātana Dharma* is that a *Jīva* has already earned its birth from its antecedent *Karma* and it is upto that *Jīva* to make the best use of its inherited potentialities which it may augment or diminish by its own efforts.

2. *Varṇa* or caste is based on spiritual foundations and is intended for the spiritual progress of its adherents. Criticism of caste is usually from persons with no orientation in the spiritual field of ends and means. Their criticism therefore lacks validity.

3. From the English word 'habit' for dress, one could perhaps deduce that *Varṇa* may be related to O. Fr. 'habit', 'abit' and L. 'habitus' state, appearance, dress, implying character from one's bodily appearance. It is the external covering or body with which the *Jīva* clothes itself. The caste in which one is clothed. The clothes (habit) in which one is cast.

4. *cāturvarṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭaṁ guṇakarmavibhāgaśaḥ (Bhagavadgītā* IV. 13).

"The fourfold social order of *Varṇas* was created by Me according to the apportioning of *Guṇa* (the mode of *Prakṛti* predominant) and *Karma* (the nature of work) appropriate to each of them."

Varṇa is the vertical division of society into four broad functional categories, *Āśramas* are the stages of life gone through by most individuals and form stations in their life calendar. In practice, the two–*Varṇāśrama*, operate together. "The theoretical basis of *Varṇāśrama* indicates a characteristic Hindu view of life......The reason for *Varṇāśrama* indicates its origin. When an aim or purpose has been placed before struggling humanity from above, the means of attaining the end must also be provided by the same agency. The scheme of *Varṇas* and the arrangement of life in *Āśramas* are the divine provision. The idea that both the schemes are man-made, is contrary to Hindu belief and to the logic of its theory of life and its goal."[5] The afore said idea, it may be noted, is also man-made and equally subject to question.

This essay will deal principally with *Varṇa* and *Jāti* loosely translated by caste. In essence, the subjects of *Varṇa* and *Āśrama* and *Puruṣārtha* are almost as comprehensive as the whole of *Sanātana Dharma*.

The institution of caste is not an arbitrary development for economic ends, nor even a historical development for racial preservation, but the application of metaphysical principles to man's end—his individual *summum bonum (Niḥśreyasa B. G.* VIII. 3—7). The order of the *Varṇas* is comparable to a spiritual handicapped race, where every member of society is enabled to pursue the highest spiritual goal according to his equipment, and this implies an equality of opportunity in a far more profound sense than any proferred by an egalitarian society.

There have been saints from all *Varṇas* in Hindu society, who have been worshipped alike by *Brāhmaṇas* and *Pañcamas*. *Īśvarabhakti*, linking with the *Ātmā* is a transcending factor for all differentiations from psychic and physical causes.[6]

There is no Hindu ordination, religious or social, that does not provide for its own transcendence. But *Varṇa* is transcended

5. K. V. Raṅgaswāmī Aiyaṅgar—*Some Aspects of the Hindu View of Life According to Dharmaśāstra*, Baroda, 1952. p. 96.

6. For the same reason, Hindus have no hesitation in adoring saints from other religions as well.

from above by *Jñāna* and *Bhakti* and not from below by secular legislation.[7] None of the great *Ācāryas* of Hinduism repudiated any regulations of the *Dharmaśāstras*.

The basis for the Hindu hierarchisation is in the diversity of men's inborn tendencies *(Saṁskāras)*, as a result of their *Karmaphala*—what they have earned by their actions and thoughts. If marriages take place within endogamous groups, heredity ensures better than any other confirmation, one's aptitude for a particular function or occupation.

It is mechanisation for mass-production for profit, generated by a hedonistic outlook, bolstered by a belief in evolution, progress and development (all contrary to spiritual truths), that is the prime cause of the destruction of the hereditary, sacred crafts and professions to which *Jātis* and *Varṇas* are related. Hereditary professions are not compatible with the modern conditions of machine production, big business and high finance and hence our hatred of caste. But mass-production and money-lending (Modern Banking) destroy the economic base of every society, as a beaver eats up a tree trunk. What to speak of its intellectual and spiritual super structure.

Machinery is a product of a profane quantitative world of mammon, *Varṇa* belongs to a sacred qualitative world of spiritual *Mārgas* for all members of a traditional social order and not merely for priests and kings. Hence the two cannot but be incompatible. Let us not delude ourselves that we can have all the mechanical devices we fancy and still promote culture and peace and prosperity.

The first requisite for peace among mankind is that all human beings must follow a proper vocation or a sacred calling, or

7. "For by the rigorous practice of prescribed virtues one actually can efface oneself, dissolving eventually the last quirk of impulse and personal resistance—thus gaining release from the little boundary of the personality and absorption in the boundlessness of universal being. *Dharma* is therefore fraught with power. It is the burning point of the whole present, past and future, as well as the way through which to pass into the transcendental consciousness and bliss of the purest spiritual Self-existence." Heinrich Zimmer. *Philosophies of India*, Landon, 1951. p. 153.

A Hindu could not escape from the obligations of his *Varṇa* except by performing his own funeral; that is, by taking *Saṁnyāsa*, when he becomes an *Ativarṇāśramī*.

their *Svadharma,* as do all the animals and plants in a virgin forest, wherewith they maintain its natural order.

This requisite is not secured by all individuals holding jobs however lucrative. A vocation (as of a *Purohita, Rājā, Mantrī, Ācārya, Śilpī, Kṛṣīvala, Kṣetrī, Sevaka* etc., etc.) provides nourishment for body, mind and soul simultaneously).[8] Obsatisfaction is not the same as the *Gītā* doctrine of diligence[9]—"*sve sve karmaṇyabhirataḥ saṁsiddhiṁ labhate naraḥ*" "Devoted, each to his own duty, man attains the highest perfection" *(Bhagavadgītā* XVIII. 45-46).

A joy by its nature is ever precarious and arbitrary and is constantly made redundant by machines and now by computers ! Food for mind and soul are outside the purview of jobs, hence their substitution by the seductive world of entertainments, whose heroes are our real idols (false gods).

Jāti and *Varṇa* belong to a superior, more than normal and desirable world of work and worship, dignity and responsibility and mutual respect for human beings, than the cut-throat world of business competition, trade and world markets and standards-of-living and ecological murder and suicide.

Caste or *Varṇa* operates most effectively when a universally valid purpose of life *(Puruṣārtha)* is accepted and common ideals of *Dharma* are recognised by both king and common man.[10] The modern secular state has no concept of *Dharma* and hence no principle of order other than the survival of-the-fittest.

8. "Now man is made with both a spiritual and a bodily nature. So he must by divine disposition both perform bodily actions and keep his mind on spiritual things: It is thus that is perfected what is spiritually intended"—St. Thomas Aquinas—*Summa Contra Gentiles,* III. 135, quoted by Ānanda Kumāraswāmī in "*The Religious Basis of the Forms of Indian Society,*" Chap. V. in *Sources of Wisdom,* Sri Lanka, 1981, note 48, p. 107.

9. "Devotion to one's work is what is meant by diligence,.......implying a being fond of and caring for one's work........of working easily and naturally *(Sahajam)*.......a working at leisure "—Ānanda Kumāraswāmī *Ibid.* p. 89.

These are quite different from the work by slaves under compulsion, or under the conditions of modern industrial production in factories.

10. We spoke of a monarchical system because it is the one best suited for the maintenance of the essential rites in a human state *(Bhagavadgītā* III. 10—14), and the participation of all members in those rites at various removes.

Caste or *Varṇa* guarantees a proportionate equality to all members of a social body as against a fictitious arithmetical equality in the greatest-good-of-the-greatest-number. It insures social stability and identity (even to the so-called criminal tribes), by providing the roots of family community occupation and denomination, for all members and maintains the quality both of species and of craftsmanship.

Jāti-Dharma provides the rules and norms of conduct for every community without the written word of a constitution.[11] Litigation is almost unknown in caste-bound communities. *Savarṇa* marriages facilitate the transmission of desired ethical qualities and aptitudes for a particular station,[12] better than through any other programmes for mass education.

Caste may be lost in a traditional society by infringement of its codes, but not gained. There have been kings of the *Śūdra* caste in the history of Bharata, but they did not become *Kṣatriyas* on that account. Rāmānuja (XI cent.) converted many people into *Śrī Vaiṣṇavas,* worshippers of Viṣṇu; but no *Ācārya* has the power to convert persons from one *Varṇa* to another.[13]

The absence of hierarchy cannot work in any practical sphere. A graded social organisation has been the characteristic of all hieratic civilizations. The fourfold division of *Brāhmaṇa,*

Ironically in a democracy or a Soviet where the rulers are ostensibly elected by a majority of citizens, the majority have no say in the decisions of the party leaders, because the party leaders have no concept of *Dharma*—the universal law of justice, peace and prosperity.

These ideas, of essential sacred rites in a kingdom, have long since disappeared from our education. We have replaced them by Five Year Plans guaranteeing a present hell on earth for a future heaven we shall never know.

11. The *Dharmaśāstras* are predominantly manuals of prescribed duties rather than of rights and priviledges. It is only in secular states that the common man must be protected from sharks and entrepreneurs.

12. Sociológists might investigate the efficiency of the Bombay Police force when its members were recruited mostly from one or two selected communities.

13. The rigidity of the Hindu social order is compensated by the flexibility of its modes of worship. Contrast with the egalitarian societies of the fascists and communists which required the compulsory worship and obedience of their dictator, on pain of death for questioning the authority of his politburo, composed of casteless bipeds !

How many millions did Hitler, Stalin and Mao eliminate in their terror-regimes ? And how many more years will the Marxists-communists of India take to open their eyes to the diabolical nature of their imported gods ?

Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and *Śūdra* has had parallels in other cultures, in the functions of priest, king, merchant and manual labourer designated respectively as the sacredotal, royal, pastoral and mechanic functions.[14] These functions are invariably bound with the entailment of freedom and responsibility, as in a household. The free have the least authority to act at random, and no king in India ever promulgated any rule of the *Dharmaśāstras*.

Caste is not synonymous with class of the modern democratic peoples. Untouchability, the idea of ritual contamination, applicable to all individuals on occasions, is not the same as colour-prejudice which is a denial of common humanity.[15]

The common effect of the performances (of their *Svadharma)* of the four *Varṇas,* is the attenuation and sublimation of the ego—to be a 'no one' for the *Brāhmaṇa* and the *Śūdra,* to be as one of heroes of chivalry and magnanimity for the *Kṣatriya* and the *Vaiśya.* This is the polar opposite of the suppression of the individuality of the factory worker and the inflation of the ego of the modern artist seeking self-expression, or as one who is the idol of the mobs in the world of show-bizness.

No normal social order can have legitimacy or be understood without its spiritual connotation.[16] As per the Law of

14. The like functions have also been defined under the heads of—the clergy, the nobility, the burgher and the serf, or elsewhere as—"Lords spiritual (priests). "Lord Temporal" (kings princes, nobles), "Third estate" or "Middle class" and the Labour class.

In sum, the *Varnas* represent the following functions—

Brāhmaṇa—Spiritual and intellectual authority; religious, ministerial, judicial and educational functions.

Kṣatriya—Royal, administrative, executive and military functions.

Vaiśya—Economic, agricultural, industrial, commercial and financial functions.

Śūdra—Productive, manufacturing, crafts and service functions.

Needless to say these functions have much overlapped over the ages by mixed marriages and other conditions. Our official policies of reservations is a tacit admission of inherited capacities.

15. The network of purity and pollution is thorough, generally consistent in detail within its terms, and permeates every conceivable aspect of life. Nothing is impermeable to pollution: no person, no thing, no act........In one sense the *Brāhmana* and the untouchable share a common task: the spiritual security and well-being of all." Richard Lannoy—*The speaking Tree,* London, 1971. p. 148-149.

16. On the purity of castes—consider the sharpness and cleanliness of knives used for grass-cutting and for surgery; the purity of fuels used for a tractor and a jetplane; the

contradictions—"Men are divided in their calling" *(Vi Vratāni Janānām Ṛv.* IX. 112. 1). So that they may be united in God.[17] The several *Varṇas* form part of one unified social body, no part can be ignored without loss to the whole (Cf. *Ṛv.* X. 90. 11-12, *Yv.* XVIII. 48; XXVI. 2).

Attempts at social unification by removing differences through legislation have only aggravated the differences—by increasing tensions, breeding animosities and forcing unfair competitions and ushering in a climate of corruption in every department of life.

Hindu society is the oldest surviving society in the world, with unbroken genealogical sources (in the *Gotras* of spiritual ancestry) and sacred traditions. The institution of *Varṇas,* as old as any traceable record of Indian history, is one of the most important causes for the endurance of Hindu society. The observance of this natural order of *Varṇas* in its true spirit, forgotten elsewhere by the passage of time, is to the credit of the Hindu nation. The blind fury of the modern miseducated Hindu leaders would seek to root out all such sustaining forces of Hindu society; they would prefer the permissive liberties of western societies to the protective restraints of Hindu *Dharma.*

Speaking of *Varṇāśrama,* one cannot forget the scriptural foreboding of *Varṇasaṅkara,* the confusion of castes, towards

sensitiveness of balances used to weigh coal and diamonds. On these analogies, a keener and purer (passionless) intellect is needed for the tasks of administration and education than for cattle breeding and tilling the soil. If one then considers the conditions necessary for producing the first type of brain, one may appreciate all the intricate regulations regarding ritual purity, pollution and human progeniture. If it is appreciated in the case of producing the best athletes and the best soldiers, why not for the best administrators and the best spiritual leaders ?

17. The castes were born from the sacrifice of Prajāpati *(Bhagavadgītā* III. 10, IV. 13; VIII. 3, 6) and it is only when every individual's work partakes of the nature of a sacrifice *(Yajña)* that he may attain the purpose of life.

Just as life begins from a single cell and reaches a maximum stage of subdivisioning in order to function as an integrated body, society too attains an optimum degree of differentiation to reach a healthy state of coordinated functions. Subdivision beyond a certain stage leads to the breakdown of normal functions as in Leukaemia, a cancerous condition (mechanisation, proliferation of salesmen, consumerism). On the other hand, the atrophy of certain cells and organs leads to degeneration of the body as in anaesthesia (dysfunction of independent craftsmen, or of officials in a totaliarian regime).

the end of the *Yuga.* We have been witness to this confusion from: industrialization and impoverishment of the craft communities, urbanization and the rapid admixture of populations, the displacement of the monarchies by alien government systems, the temptations of the intellectual elite for lucrative pursuits, co-educational institutions and late marriages (biology cannot wait for sociology and economics), and several other causes, not forgetting the cinema and women's liberation, but above all by our profane as against our sacred values.

It would be quite unrealistic to expect a restoration of our *Varṇa Vyavasthā* without crying halt to our industrial development and reversing the process of urbanization and promoting a handicraft economy, or without restoration of our *Rājadharma* and the intellectual aristocracy as members of our administrative bodies. Before all, the establishment of our *Rāṣṭra Dharma* and all its implications in our politically independent *Puṇyabhūmi* is an urgent task to be undertaken without talking about caste or *Varṇa* or reservations.

Where do we start with this Sisyphean task, with nuclear war-heads poised all round to blow up our entire solar system ? This writer would suggest five small steps to begin with—

1. The elimination of hoardings and large advertisements everywhere.
2. The gradual reduction of the bank-rate and making usurious rates of interest on money a punishable crime.
3. The drastic reduction of the speeds of all vehicles on our roads.
4. The withdrawal of reservations in our education departments.
5. Holding as ideal the transformation of our modern five star culture into our ancient office of *Pañcamahāyajña*.

The landing on the moon this century became possible after it was considered desirable. The re-establishment of a *Dharma Rāṣṭra* in Bhārata will be possible only after we are convinced that it is indeed desirable. Meanwhile we have *Śrī Gītācārya's* assurance—'*nahi kalyāṇakṛt kaścit durgatiṁ tāta gacchati*' (*Bhagavadgītā* VI. 40). "The doer of any good whatsoever, my dear one, never comes to grief."



Brahmacarya Āśrama

The Four Āśramas

"The *Brahmacāri*, the *Gṛhastha*, the *Vānaprastha* and the *Yati* (ascetic) these four separate orders are sustained by the ardour of the *Gṛhastha* (householder)."

(*Manusmṛti* VI. 87)

Pravṛtti Mārga

Brahmacaryāśrama (The foundation of Dharma)—

At the master's feet *Guruśuśrūṣā* treading the path to *Brahma*. A student's years, an apprentice at one's trade—a school of ethics. Celibate preparation for corporate life, sometimes living on alms, discharging his debt to the *Ṛṣis*.

Gṛhasthāśrama (The pillar of Dharma)—

The keeper of the flock—*Yajamāna*, state of married life, of a house-holder, performing all obligatory rites; earning his livelihood by his *Svadharma* (vocation) and supporting the other *Āśramas;* entitled to seek legitimate pleasures; discharging his debts to ancestors, gods and fellow creatures. The active life.

Nivṛtti Mārga

Vānaprasthāśrama (The crown of Dharma)—

On the pilgrim's way—the anchorite having fulfilled all social obligations, having relinquished family responsibilities, having enjoyed all legitimate desires, desires to intensify spiritual pursuits, by withdrawal from the active life.

Saṁnyāsāśrama (The beacon of Dharma)—

Quenching of the firebrand—the ascetic. Life of total renunciation. Having forfeited the privileges of social life, he becomes a wanderer, a *Tapasvī*, a *Satyāgrahī*—an active seeker of liberation.

A true *Saṁnyāsī* justifies the whole Hindu society and all humanity. (Not normally open to all *Varṇas*).

"The organisation of men and life into *Varṇa* and *Āśrama* enables the fulfilment of the purpose of creation if followed in spirit." —KVR

Philosophy of Social Service in Sanātana Dharma

—*Dr. Suresh Chandra Sharma*

Sanātana Dharma or the religion eternal is the repository of universal values of life and action. These values are ceaselessly flourishing in Indian society from time immemorial. Because of this particular characteristic of *Sanātana Dharma,* Aldous Huxley a western writer calls it as the perennial philosophy. Popularly it is also called as the Hindu religion.

The essence of this philosophy is the spiritual view of life. The attainment of spirituality is the *summum bonum* of life. *Sanātana Dharma* places only one goal before human society which is 'to see the Eternal in the fleeting panorama of life' 'अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम्' (*Gītā* IX. 33). But unfortunately this message has not been properly understood by majority and hence could not be implemented in society. Most people confuse the spirituality with life-negating ideology consequently they show indifference to this great philosophy.

Sanātana Dharma offers a comprehensive view of man in society with its two aspects viz., material prosperity (अभ्युदय) and spiritual fulfilment (निःश्रेयस). Both the aspirations of human heart find place in the philosophy of social service of *Sanātana Dharma.* Viewed from this angle human life cannot be segregated into individual and collective living. Life according to this philosophy is an integrated whole of which man and society are two aspects. Life is the manifestation of divine. Attainment of spiritual excellence individually with the general welfare of society is the scheme of *Sanātana Dharma* which finds a clear cut expression in the following verse of *Īśāvāsyopaniṣad* (1)—

ईशा वास्यमिदँ् सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्य स्विद् धनम्॥

"All this—whatever is ephemeral in this changeful universe, must be enveloped by the Lord. By this renunciation nourish yourself. Do not covet the wealth because it is faithful to nobody."

The verse states that what we perceive as the phenomenal world,

is verily God and man's only concern should be to unveil this truth for himself and the society and the way shown is as follows—

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम्।
स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः॥

(*Gītā* XVIII. 46)

"From whom is the evolution of all beings, by whom all this is pervaded, worshipping Him with his own duty a man attains perfection."

In this one verse we find the theory as well as practice of the philosophy of social service. Performance of duty as worship to divine is the foundation of this philosophy. But one should remember well that it is not the same as 'work is worship'—the so called slogan of Society. Work is worship is a secular slogan while worship of divine through work is spiritual in content. The uniqueness of this social philosophy lies in opening several gates to worship the divine depending upon different tastes and temperaments (स्वकर्मणा).

All the social philosophies have come into existence to solve the problems of society but this point should not be forgotten that the world itself is also a great problem. Social philosophy put forth by *Sanātana Dharma* solves the riddle of the world for philosophers as well as social workers. The world before us is the manifestation of divine, proclaims the religion eternal. The purpose of human life is to direct one's all energies for the service of divine in man. One of the floating verses of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* brings this truth into focus—

कायेन वाचा मनसेन्द्रियैर्वा
बुद्ध्याऽऽत्मना वानुसृतस्वभावात्।
करोति यद् यत् सकलं परस्मै
नारायणायेति समर्पयेत्तत्॥

(XI. 2. 36)

"*Bhāgavata Dharma* consists not in particular mode of worship but in the mood of worship that whatever is performed by body, speech, mind, senses, intelligence, ego and other natural impulses of body-mind complex—is an offering for Nārāyaṇa the divine."

With this attitude man nourishes society and the society nourishes man to express the best in individual and collective life.

Swāmī Vivekānanda once remarked—"I preach that God which is ignorantly called as man." The rotaries of perennial philosophy worship divine (तमभ्यर्च्य) in man through variety of social concerns. To quote the powerful words of sister Niveditā—"If the many and the one be indeed the same reality then it is not all modes of worship alone but all modes of work, all modes of struggle, all modes of creation which are paths of realization. No distinction, henceforth between sacred and secular. To labour is to pray. To conquer is to renounce. Life is iteslf religion."

In the light of above discussion some of the salient features of this social philosophy are enumerated—

1. Worker is more important than work.
2. Duties are primary and rights are secondary.
3. Quality and quantity of the product must be balanced.
4. Spiritual motivation is superior to secular one.
5. Competition needs replacement by co-operation.
6. Division of labour into different psychological types (वर्णाः) and stations of life (आश्रमाः) are meant to help the weaker sections of society.
7. The sense of any type of superiority by birth or vocation is a sure sign of social decay.
8. The aim and end of all social service is to develop man and unfold the divine in life.
9. We are not supposed to help anyone in society, we simply serve.
10. Renunciation and service are the twin ideals of social service.

Every social philosophy today suffers from two challenges viz., external welfare and an inner impoverishment. All the affluent nations are facing the challenge of inner dissatisfaction and all underdeveloped countries face the challenge of outer social security. It is the social philosophy of *Sanātana Dharma* only which has the capacity to meet out both the challenges. This is the need of hour and cry of human soul. Our duty therefore at present is to free this philosophy from the sterile speculation of scholars and implement it into day to day dealings of social life. Then only we can place as the beacon light for the welfare of whole world.

Marriage in Sanātana Dharma Vis-A-Vis Modern Findings

—*Dr. A. S. Zadgaonkar*

Many volumes on Indology are available which discuss the origin and special features of the *Varna* system in India. Most of the authors have accepted the system as derived from *Sanātana Dharma*. A western writer[1] Sherring in his book *Hindu Tribes and Castes* has severely condemned the caste *(Varṇa)* system, while Meridith in '*Europe and Asia*' has praised this system. The *Smṛti Granthas* (स्मृति ग्रंथ) have described various castes and subcastes. They have accepted unanimously that the origin of this *Varṇa* system was not in idle fancies, but in the roots of the history of traditions, personality development and philosophy.

All the scriptures mention four *Varṇas*[2] viz., *Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya* and *Śūdra*. Actually *Varṇa* theory is based upon family, culture, nature and the profession, and it also incorporates the moral and intellectual capabilities. The description of duties, as well as responsibilities of these *Varṇas* is found in religious literature. Study of *Vedas*, performance of rituals, *Yajña* (यज्ञ), *Dāna* (दान) etc., are amongst the essential characteristics of *Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas* and *Vaiśyas*.[3]

The *Brāhmaṇas*[4] used to live in poverty and in a simple manner with high thinking.One of their special tasks was the preservation and development of culture. The *Kṣatriyas*[5] used to rule, protect the countrymen, remain active in defence as and when required. Payment of tax to the rulers, agriculture, dairy, business and

1- धर्मशास्त्रका इतिहास, लेखक डॉ॰ पा॰ वा॰ काणे, हिंदी समिति, उत्तर प्रदेश, लखनऊ।

2- रुचं नो धेहि ब्राह्मणेषु रुचं राजसु नस्कृधि। रुचं विश्येषु शूद्रेषु मयि........(तैत्ति॰ सं॰ V.7. 6. 3-4)

3- द्विजातीनामध्ययनम्...........(गौतम X. 1—3.7.50)

4- प्रज्ञा वर्धमाना चतुरो धर्मान्..........(शतपथ XI. 5.7.1)

5- क्षत्रियोऽजनि विश्वस्य भूतस्याधिपतिः.........(ऐतरेय ब्राह्मण XXXVIII. 39.3)

commerce etc., were duties of the *Vaiśyas*[6]. The *Śūdras*[7] had special duties of serving the above three *Dwijas* (द्विज) and in addition they used to work at humble occupations, viz., coolies, daily wages workers and as painter etc., for their livelihood.

The *Sanātana Varṇa*-system also had directives and rules regarding the marriage affairs such that the offspring maintains the characteristics required to fulfil the duties prescribed for the *Varṇa* system. The *Dharma-Śāstrīs* have directed that a male member of certain *Varṇa* should marry a female of the same *Varṇa*. In exeptional cases, girls from a lower *Varṇa* could also be accepted, but in no case a male from a lower *Varṇa* was allowed to marry a girl from a higher *Varṇa*. In such a combination, called *Pratiloma Vivāha* (प्रतिलोम विवाह) the offspring would be called crossbreed (वर्ण संकर). Yājñavalkya (I. 92) has mentioned six *Anuloma* series, while Manu has defined six *Pratiloma* crossbreed series. The *Anulomas* are named as *Mūrdhāvasikta* (मूर्धावसिक्त), *Ambaṣṭha* (अम्बष्ठ) *Niṣāda* (निषाद), *Māhiṣya* (माहिष्य), *Ugra* (उग्र) and *Karaṇa* (करण), while the *Pratilomas* are named as *Sūta* (सूत), *Vaidehaka* (वैदेहक), *Cāṇḍāla* (चाण्डाल), *Māgadha* (मागध), *Kṣattā* (क्षत्ता) and *Ayogava* (अयोगव).

For example, an offspring of *Brāhmaṇa* male and a *Vaiśyas* female would be called *Ambaṣṭha* (अम्बष्ठ) and is clearly an *Anuloma* affair. In the same manner other combinations would produce different *Anuloma* offsprings as named.

An example of *Pratiloma Vivāha* can be a *Vaiśya* male marrying a Brahmin female and producing offsprings named as *Vaidehaka* (वैदेहक). Many such *pratiloma* products would be generated from different combinations.

After a detailed study of the characteristics of such crossbreed offsprings, jobs fitting to their nature were assigned to them. For example a *Niṣāda* would be the best boatman, a *Sūta* would be the best chariot-driver, and so on. In this way, all possible *Varṇa-Saṅkara* combinations were allotted appropriate jobs and professions. It is clear from this, that they must have done a thorough

6- वैश्यो मनुष्याणां गावः पशूनां.........(तैत्ति॰ सं॰ VII.1.1.5).

7- शुश्रूषा शूद्रस्येतरेषां वर्णानाम्.........(आपस्तम्ब 1.1.1.7-8).

study of human behaviours and nature alongwith the biological/ genetic aspects and then finally concluded in deriving the *Varṇa* system.

Let us now see, how the *Varṇa* system has a relation with social behaviour, whether the *Varṇa* system in the *Sanātana Dharma* was a simple social classification or there was any definite aim behind it.

Today man has well advanced in science, especially bioscience and bio-technology. The scientists are now trying to produce, through bio-engineering processes, the predetermined characters. Though their approach in producing such predetermined types of cross breed animals has proved to be a good success, they are not yet successful, so much, in case of human beings.

About thirty years back, a famous scientist D. Hamilton[8] had written an article in this connection. He had divided the social behaviour in four important categories, viz., (1) Altruistic (2) Co-operative (3) Selfish and (4)Spiteful. It is worth remembering here that an ancient Indian poet Bhartṛhari (भर्तृहरि) had already classified human behaviour in four categories. According to him these categories are:—

1. Holy men—as Altruistic—those who help others even at the cost of themselves.

2. Commoners—as co-operators—who help others only if it is not against their self-interest.

3. Demons—as selfish—who even hurt others if it serves their self-interest.

4. Spiteful—who hurt others for no reason whatsoever. The above-mentioned behaviour pattern, for a group of persons, can be attributed to genetic development of cells.

1. Sex Effect—

The ratio of male to female offspring of any individual is an example of the phenomenon readily explained by natural selection. Since population growth is limited primarily by the number of females, group selection arguments would suggest that

8. *Evaluation of Behaviour*, by Madhav Gadgil, *Science Today*, 1980 March.

the sex ratio should greatly favour the male to avoid excessive population growth.

If there is an imbalance of sex in the population, any individual of minority sex makes a greater contribution to the group behavioural composition of population in the next generation. This would lead to a reduction in the proportion of the numerically dominent sex till the imbalance is reduced.

2.Blood-Relationship—

The behaviour of group interest may be in such behaviour being directed towards one's blood relationships. There are two sets of chromosomes in each cell. One set is derived from the mother and the other from the father. Therefore, the offspring shares half of the genes from father and half from mother. Similarly there is fifty percent probability that any gene that one has, is also present in one's brother or sister. Further, there is the probability of 25 percent of any given gene that one shares with one's grand-parents, aunts/uncles; and one-eighth of his first cousin etc.

Example of Present-Day Materialistic Society—

Modern theory of natural selection suggests that an individual is well off, directing his altruistic behaviour towards his blood relatives and its intensity depends upon the closeness of the blood-relationship. In a society where polygamy is prevalent the children of man's wife/wives are not always his biological children. He may not have any blood-relationship, whatsoever, with them. On the other hand, his sister's children will have a certain degree of blood-relatedness with him. Therefore, in a polygamic society it is often of greater advantage for a man to take care of his sister's children, than of his wife's children.

Behavioural Safe-quarding in Varṇa System—

The above mentioned safeguarding of behavioural characteristics is also found in the *Varṇa* system by way of sex-ratio and blood-relationship.

1. Sex Ratio—

The marriage should be arranged within the same *Varna* or at the most there can be an *Anuloma Vivāha*. The *Vaiśya* boy marries a *Vaiśya* girl (and similarly for each *Varṇa);* or the boy of higher *Varṇa* marries a girl of lower *Varṇa*. The *Niṣāda* male will

have fifty percent characteristics (cultural) of Brahmin. However, a female child will maintain the characteristics of her mother.

The *Dharma Sūtra* (धर्मसूत्र) clearly mentions that if this *Niṣāda* son marries a *Vaiśya* girl and the process of such marriage continues, then the 6th generation offspring will be called *Vaiśya Varṇa*.

It is obvious that the *Brāhmaṇa Varṇa* behavioural characteristics are lost in general and *Vaiśya Varṇa* behavioural characteristics dominate in successive generations.

2. Blood-Relation—

Dharma Sūtra recommends that to safeguard the inherited characteristics of blood-relation, marriage should be arranged in the mother's brother's family, rather than the father's family. This culture prevailed during the *Mahābhārata* period and still continues in Southern India and Maharastra, even today.

Conclusion—

This in view of the behavioural phenomenon, and to protect it, the marriage system *(Vivāha Paddhati)* as depicted in the *Sanātana Dharma Sūtras* should be followed, so that the behavioural pattern formed due to *Varṇa* system can be protected—(1) either by blood-relationship i.e., inheritance of cells through sister's children, or (2) by having a natural selection strictly as directed by the *Varṇa* system of *Dharma Sūtras*.

Further, it will be worth while to emphasize that the *Varṇa* scale was a practical scale of classifying community's behavioural pattern. The wrong practice of *Varṇa* system has led to the present day crisis of lost character and the increasing in the number of selfish and spiteful people.

> The food that has been offered to the manes, that which has been cooked by a woman who has recently brought forth a child, and food cooked by an unknown person should not be eaten. The milk also of a cow that has recently calved should not be taken. The food provided by an usurer is equivalent to dirt, while that provided by a woman living on prostitution is equivalent to filth.

Evolution of Sanātana Dharma

—N. S. Pandya

The word *Dharma* in *Saṁskṛta* language has been defined in various ways but no single word in English correctly and comprehensively expresses its meaning.

Dharma may mean to be an introspective attempting made by an individual to extend his field of consciousness and direct his mental faculties in search of the unknown, Infinite and Eternal Essence.

Rising gradually from gross sensory levels to subtler regions of human psyche, he tries to reach the proximity of the Immanent entity which is believed to equally pervade the universe as well as his inner-most self.

In the process he loses himself, his own identity in that which he is searching for and gets a notion that he is but a microcosmic unit of the macrocosmic creation.

Dharma can be a complex social phenomenon, guiding and influencing moral conduct of the society and its individual numbers. A combination of concepts, customs, cult-rituals and theological aphorisms having irresistible influence over the social groups, form its basis.

Dharma may encompass a number of norms of social conduct to include righteousness, virtue, observance of prescribed religious practices, social and moral duty, justice, equity, piety, propriety, devotion and adherence to sacred laws handed down from generation to generation in the form of scriptural injunctions.

Dharma may take the form of an uniting force bringing together groups of people of diverse cultures and ways of life into a loosely bound simple order emerging as an institution.

The exclusive ideas, urges, feelings and general religious outlook of the constituent groups of people are channelled, finding easy expression through the institution. The dedicated and zealous

concepts of the social groups about supernatural powers, governing the universe, blend, resulting in divine powers being attributed to forces of nature.

Dharma can be a combination of tradition, faith and devotion. Tradition is adherence to elements of culture inherited generally by oral communication, a mode of thought or behaviour, customs, usages and precedents. Faith is conviction in the truth and trustworthiness of beliefs in God and religious dictums which have no logical basis or material evidence. Devotion is fervent attachment or loyalty full of religious ardour, emotional warmth or passion.

II

In some period of pre-historic time when human intelligence was just awakening and man tried to comprehend the realities of existence many questions might have arisen in his inquisitive mind. In the solitary encounters between nature and his own inner self he might have speculated upon the possible answers to these questions. The questions could have been about the creation as seen around him and a possible creator as visualised by him, the purpose of creation and nature of the creator if he existed. The mystery of life and death confounded him. The role played by the extra-terrestrial powers believed to be in control of natural phenomena was also mystifying. Then the questions about the purpose of life on earth and relevance of God in the order of things might also have occupied his mind.

The human mind, in its flights of fanciful introversive explorations, senses something vague and flitting hovering at the far edge of his consciousness. As the search sublimes, becomes wider and more penetrating a faint contact with an insubstantial, illusive, vague, remote and ill-defined something is made. As the exploration continues reaching deeper levels of consciousness the seeker becomes more receptive, the response becomes more specific and it becomes possible for him to hold the impressions in his memory longer, allow his mind to act upon the impressions received and arrive at a somewhat intelligible interpretation.

The sharpness of intellect, the knowledge stored in the memory banks and personal inclinations of the seeker, no doubt modulate the final picture seen by him as reflected on his mental screen.

A relationship is, now being established between the seeker and the sought. The seeker experiences a feeling of awakening to the discovery of his own lost self, his super-ego in the labyrinths of his mental processes. A line of communication with the super-ego or absolute-ego has now been opened.

This is the state of Ultimate Bliss when there remains no sense of diversity but integration, unity and a resultant state of equilli-brium known as Existence, Consciousness, Bliss (सत्, चित्, आनन्द).

The human soul yearning for contact with its mega-self is drawn along on a mighty torrent of faith and devotion. The personality grows with the development of field of perception, becomes more refined and the aim becomes clearer. Avoiding all entanglements and pitfalls a pathway is blazed through the wilderness of human thought leading the seeker towards a profound understanding of the secret of being.

III

With the growth of intelligence there arises in man a craving, an unsatiable desire, to know and understand that which lies beyond hidden by the veil behind which he cannot see—the tantalizing, mysterious and confounding veil of nature. The desire remains unfulfilled, the everlasting search will continue till the end of time.

So vast, so magnificent and so heart-warming is the quest that the human soul experiences ecstatic gratification in his continual strivings to unravel the mystery. However the mystery never ends, as the solution of one puzzle seems imminent many more problems emerge. These resultant problems are more confounding and provide an impetus for renewed search and formulation of new hypothesis.

The human mind like a processing unit becomes the receptacle of inputs by the universal mind. The blessed human race has the proud privilege of processing these divine inputs and interpreting

the output by means of the gifts of intelligence and ingenuity given to it by its creator.

Man has an instinctive belief that it is knowledge and knowledge alone which will lead him from darkness to light, on the way of self-enlightenment and truth.

So, with hope in his heart, faith in his God and fervent prayer on his lips, man has been treading this path for ages after ages. As he proceeds, he feels confident that the path he has taken will ultimately lead him to emancipation and self-realization.

Sanātana Dharma a truly universal religion—helps man in these strivings to reach up to higher levels of existence and ultimate liberation.

IV

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।

(*Gītā* IX. 4)

"By Me, of the imperceptible form,is all this permeated."

View-points differ on the origin of religion: One view is that religion originated in primitive societies as a reflection of the utter helplessness of man in the face of powerful forces of nature. He turned to unearthly entities which he imagined were dominating and directing the flow of the stream of life. He propitiated the beneficent forces which blessed him, protected him and granted him boons in the form of material prosperity, well-being and social power.

The minds of people were thus diverted from facing the realities of life. They became passive, dependent and supplicant to the celestial known, which were assumed to guide and maintain order in the world. Instead of exercising his own initiative and using his ability to seek solutions of the mundane problems he encountered, man became servile and cringed before the will of gods excercised through the medium of a powerful theological hierarchy. His original creative potential ability and ingenuity lay dormant and man became and remained a willing slave to the tyrannic concept of an awe-inspiring religion.

Another view is that the ancient master-minds had realised

certain truths which were revealed to them during the course of their meditations. Their concentrated consciousness extracted, as it were, the essence, the knowledge, the cosmic truths from the super-conscious by the interplay of ideas and intellect.

Their inner-self the subconscious, had reached inward to contact the universal superconsciousness during the course of exercises of contemplation and recovered from the Grand Store of Infinite Knowledge the wisdom, the Eternal Truth.

Ravages of time have had their effect on these truths which have been metamorphosed into various forms, but the basic ideas can be summarised in a general way.

V

The Supreme Primary Element which is the essence and source of creation, has as its active principle *Śakti*—the eternal consort of God. *Śakti* manifests at material level as visible forms of variegated attributes and interactions of forces of Nature.

The majestic puzzle, the creation, comes into being when the Supreme Divine Reality sets into motion its material component, as a system of continuous actions and reactions, attractions and repulsions.

Nature, the primary cosmic substance emerging out of the womb of space and time (महत् योनिः) takes the form of processes and forces which produce and control phenomena. Nature is eternal, indestructible, all pervasive and tangible. The omnipotent cause, which has willed itself into being, provides the motive power for setting the cycle of evolution going. This cause is self-sufficient and is self-enlightenment itself.

The majesty of *Sanātana Dharma* unfolds before human consciousness as a depiction of the mysteries of being in a manner intelligible to every discerning mind. The ideas which are assumed to have been revealed to the human mind spontaneously and hence are said to be self-generated (स्वयंभू) have expressed and implied in the most subtle manner the universality of the creation as a whole.

These ideas have also brought out the nature of the rythmic functioning of the creation in its unitary aspect as a function of

the play (लीला) of the grand unmanifested power behind phenomena, the power of God.

This element which being one unfolds as many (एकोऽहं बहु स्याम्) in the form of universal harmony expressed as motion in nature, has been designated 'that' (तद्) which is beyond the perview of human cognition and understanding in the normal manner.

This concept of truth in *Sanātana Dharma* is a reflection of deep intuitional stirring in the human mind conveyed as best as could be in terms of human language.

Through ages past, these outward expressions of inner realizations have acted as beacons and accorded a sense of direction to the later esoteric explorers who have turned to them for direction and inspiration.

Sanātana Dharma presents God as a fundamental truth without the inhibiting adjuncts of time and space. It is a state of perfect equillibrium with harmonious potentiality constituting all that is.

VI

In India we are the proud inheritors of this treasure of wisdom and thought which each one of us cherish and may further explore in our own way.

With faith in our hearts we search for the truth which leads us towards light, emancipation and self-realization.

As we rise higher and higher in our search our goal of self-realization seems nearer and the ordent craving in our soul for understanding and harmonizing with the trancendent element in our own being asserts itself.

When this stage is reached *Sanātana Dharma* dignifies man, encourages him to establish harmonious social relations, bring about a high moral order and put the gifts of his creative abilities to work. The world is transformed into a noble institution in which the blissful majesty of being displays itself as the will of God. *Sanātana Dharma* crystallizes out of the ocean of human consciousness as a self-realized truth not trammeled by the bounds of intellectual faculties. It becomes the culmination of the evolutionary process of nature through the medium of man.

VII

Sanātana Dharma, the universal and eternal religion of man, practised in the vast sub-continent of India, is the most ancient religion in the world. There is no one particular founder of this religion, no one apostle of God privileged to speak on his behalf. Historians have tried to establish the time of its origin with varying results.

Sanātana Dharma developed as the religion of the Hindus, the people who had settled in the plains of the majestic river Indus. Hinduism is free from dogma as it does not have anyone well defined axiomatic philosophy or principle. It is a religion par-excellent, eternal and universal.

Man awoke to the transitoriness of life when he noticed the wonders of creation around him. This awareness synthesized itself in the form of *Sanātana Dharma.* As generations passed and man added to his store of knowledge and wisdom and became more proficient in the use of material resources, his understanding of the subtle nature of religion became more lucid. He had by now adopted empirical methods of contemplation of God, climaxing in the majesty of conception and grandeur of unsurpassed exposition. This process of sublimation is continuous and perpetual.

As the 'Individual Ego' establishes a harmonious, exhilarating and blissful relation with the 'Absolute Ego' a process of interaction tending towards gradual merger of the two takes place. The human soul enriches itself, raises itself in the scale of existence and harvests rich spiritual rewards.

Sanātana Dharma the initiator of theistic thought in man has helped him achieve a high degree of spiritual enlightenment. It has also helped to establish eternal values in human social relationship.

The quest for a religion of high spiritual moral and intellectual worth is an adventure into the unknown. All great religions have shown the path for this search by adopting various disciplines. Hindu seers visualised all this, ages ago and have left a rich heritage in the form of *Vedānta* which comprises the revealed literature, the *Vedas,* the four principal sacred books of India. *Vedas* include the hymns, the *Brāhmaṇas* (precepts) with sub-divisions of

Āraṇyakas (theology) and *Upaniṣads* (philosophy). The *Upaniṣads* discuss God, man and nature, the cause and purpose of existence in an open-minded, free and frank manner.

Intellectual liberty is the guiding spirit of *Sanātana Dharma*. There is complete freedom of thought and action. No particular path of spiritual advancement has been prescribed. There is no particular principle, belief, idea or opinion authoritatively proclaimed to be absolute truth.

Sanātana Dharma does not reject anyone. Each and every living being has an honourable place in it. Seekers of truth who think in their own way, undertake researches as it suits them best, enquire and deliberate on the mystery of being, are all welcome to contribute to and build up the noble religious institution that *Sanātana Dharma* is.

Integration of spirit and development of an all-encompassing outlook on life are the characteristics of *Sanātana Dharma*, brought about by its clarity, nobility, open-mindedness and tolerance of varied opinions.

Sanātana Dharma has a pragmatic approach on all aspects of life. It leaves every individual group in the society to seek emancipation in its own way, thereby contributing to the rise of level of human existence to the state of the supreme spiritual joy and bliss.

Sanātana Dharma promotes ideas of personal dignity, nobility, generosity, spiritual advancement tolerance and devotion along with high moral standards.

Sanātana Dharma has a message for the world at large. Eschew dissensions, disharmony and follow the path of love, truth, spiritual accord and mutual respect.

Sanātana Dharma is an expression of the majesty of creation, harmony of nature and a unifying stream of consciousness leading man to ultimate bliss. It helps him onward on the path of spiritual evolution by guiding him in his mental processes and lifting him to nobler levels of being in the scale of evolutionary processes flowing towards unity with God.

Deep down in the heart of every human being is a keen desire

to know, to learn, to understand the mysteries of life, to penetrate the illusion of nature (माया) and in his own way to try to unravel the secrets of being.

Let the exalted teachings of *Sanātana Dharma* encourage man to become capable of expressing in his own earthly language the message from the self-illuminated universal intelligence and omnipotent consciousness, the ultimate integrated whole (पूर्ण) of which he—(man) living on the tiny planet earth amidst the vast cosmos, is but a significant fragment.

असतो मा सद् गमय ।
तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ।
मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ।

From the unreal lead me to the real,
From the darkness lead me to light,
From death lead me to immortality.

By the knowledge of Self, grief, sorrow, tribulation etc., are all gone. Just as a cobbler, after being selected in the Government service as a Tahasīladāra, gives up his profession of shoe-making and does not even care to remember his leather work, so, too, due to divine knowledge, when you realize Godhood, you have no business to look back to your miserable life of distress and affliction. All your worries, anxieties are, as if, evaporated automatically.

O, you citizens of the country of those who attain salvation, O you descendants of the *Ṛṣis,* just as the cobbler who had been doing the leather work for generations, does not think of doing that work even in dream; when he becomes a *Tahasīladāra,* so too, you have no business to create the world of your little self *(Jīva Sṛṣṭi).* You are already Śiva personified and son of immortality. You are already God, *(Brahma),* since eternity. Why should you have any worry? You are freedom incarnate.

—*Swami Rama Tirtha*

Rule of Law

—P. Govindarajan

In the physical universe we find that right from the infinitesimal atom to the huge celestial bodies all are governed by eternal natural laws and nothing is disorderly or chaotic. The solar system, the various elements, particles of matter, the physical body of living beings are all characterised by orderliness and work under set norms. In the human body, the blood-pressure, the temperature, the heart beats/pulse rate are all properly regulated and any deviation or abnormality is a symptom of illness. Because of the existence of set laws, science is in a position to gain knowledge through formulation of theories covering various aspects of nature and the physical world. Human being's eternal quest has been to conquer nature and use it for the benefit and welfare of mankind. As all things in the physical universe proceed mechanically like clock-work according to established laws, scientists ascribe everything to nature and deny the existence of any Law-Maker as they feel that in the scientific scheme of things there can be no place for any Almighty or First Cause.

What are the eternal laws which govern the activities of human beings ? Can man claim that because he is created in the likeness or image of God, he is not subject to any law and has total and uninhibited freedom to act or behave in any manner he likes ? Is he not answerable to some higher-up for his actions ? God gave the world only the Ten Commandments to follow but human society has promoted hundreds, if not thousands, of legislations covering almost every conceivable aspect of human life. Can any society survive without legislation or a total break down of the law and order machinery ? Man realises that for the survival and the continued existence of civilised human society, laws to discipline and regulate the activities of individuals are absolutely essential to safeguard the interest of citizens as uninhibited freedom of individuals can lead only to anarchy.

Apart from man-made social laws and regulations, are there no natural laws which govern the human activities ? Among the world religions, only Hinduism and its three allies viz., Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism believe in the *Karma* theory or the law relating to the results of human actions. The *Karma* theory is based on the law of cause and effect, actions and reactions and the principle "as you sow so you reap". In terms of the theory, all physical and mental actions of human beings in terms of thoughts, words and deeds, have their unfailing effects at one time or the other. Noble and altruistic actions can never bring any adverse or bad results and anti-social or criminal actions cannot be expected to bring forth good results in the long run and immediate results may only prove to be short-lived. Underlying the *Karma* theory is the belief in the transmigration of an eternal life energy called soul or *Ātmā* which passes through different life forms based on the effects of its own actions. Death is not considered as an end in itself but as an opportunity to make a fresh beginning on some other plane of life to reap the effects of the unfructified actions or to make amends for past misdeeds.

Hinduism and its three allies are the only religions which give the pride of place to human actions not only physical but also mental and *Karma* theory is the only doctrine which gives coherent and satisfactory answers to the inequalities and sufferings in the human society. If man exceeds his bounds and abuses his freedom and privileges, even if he escapes the man-made legislations, he cannot escape the law relating to *Karma* and nature in its own way takes care of the effects of his actions. Hinduism and allied religions firmly believe that the one inexorable and infallible eternal law of cause and effect, governs the activities of all the living beings and there is no escape from its clutches except through practice of religion. In terms of this law, the joys and sufferings of these beings are never without the underlying causes. One may wonder what is the place of God in the operation of the law of *Karma*. If good or bad actions bring their inevitable results, has the Creator any role to play ? Self-effort is believed to be only a by-product of God's Grace and

it is God as the Inner Controller who induces the law-abiding individual soul to perform such actions as can lead to knowledge *(Jñāna)* and ultimate realization. The *Kaṭhopaniṣad* says that leading a spiritual life is like walking on a razor's edge and without constant vigilance there can always be a slip.

Bloody revolutions have taken place in human society in the name of liberty, equality and fraternity and the noblest intentions of founding fathers for life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, have been enshrined in indelible letters in Declaration of Independence. Whatever may be the human intentions, the fact remains that human beings are born unequal in the earthly plane in terms of sex, in terms of complexion or colour, in terms of place of birth or nationality, in terms of silver spoon in the mouth etc., and the inequalities commence right from the time of birth. With all freedom, liberty and independence, the human soul cannot decide the place and time of its birth, its sex, its parents etc., and some unfortunate beings are born with physical or mental defects. Who decides these aspects and on what basis ? Can the Theory of Evolution propounded by the scientists explain congenital inequalities on the basis of "Natural Selection" ? Is this selection capricious and arbitrary or a matter of mere coincidence and chance. Are any options available to the human foetus to change its parents or sex or to get rid of the physical or mental handicaps ? Having been born in this world, man does not want to die prematurely. Who decides the time and manner of exit of the soul from this world and on what basis ? Euthanasia and suicides are unnatural and only the miserable opt for this exceptional exit route out of sheer desperation and should not, therefore, be taken cognizance of.

The inequalities at birth and during life time, cannot be rationally explained except in terms of the *Karma* doctrine as each individual has to reap the consequences of his own good or bad deeds some time or the other *(Gītā* XVIII.12). An ethically perfect and a morally good behaviour which almost everyone longs for, is based on right thoughts, right words and right deeds which have their foundation in the Doctrine of *Karma*. The moral

decay of the present day society can be directly attributed to the lack of faith in the operations of the law of cause and effect in the moral sphere of human behaviour.

All living beings have only one thing in common and that is life energy. Nobody knows for certain what is this life-energy, where it originates and how. It is also not known whether there is any basic difference in the life energy among the different species of animate beings though there are wide differences in their outward form in terms of size, shape, form and structure which for facilitating easy identification are given different names by man. All animals breathe, have feelings, possess intelligence and also consciousness and barring the outer form are in no way different from the rational human animal. Only Hinduism and that too *Vedānta* in particular categorically states that the eternal soul passes through four life forms of plants, animals, humans and celestials with decrease or increase in their intelligence and awareness on account of the effects of their actions *(Karma)* and points out the way to liberation or release from bondage to matter *(Prakṛti)*.

Thinking that the individual soul is a helpless victim and slave to its past actions, the western scholars dub the *Karma* theory as fatalistic and the renunciation of actions as otherworldly but an objective and unbiased study of the *Karma* doctrine reveals that their criticism is based on an improper and incorrect understanding of the moral law. The miseries and sufferings at the mundane level have been closely observed by the ancient sages including Lord Buddha and based on the empirical observations. The theory has been formulated which have withstood the test of time because of its basic soundness and infallibility. There can be no other rational way except through the Theory of *Karma* that the differences among the living beings in general and the human beings in particular can be logically and coherently explained. *Karma* theory, therefore, seems to be an undeniable fact of life and cannot be conveniently wished away, even if one dislikes it. Critics may still argue that if only man would have been endowed by nature with clear memory to remember his

misdeeds for which he is suffering or has to suffer, he might have been spared of the agony of further suffering by avoiding the repetition of the past misdeeds. 'To be forewarned is to be forearmed' is good in theory but this would imply that man should have knowledge of the deeds for which he has to suffer in the future. By knowing the shape of things to come in the future man will be miserable in the present also and one has to thank God for his abundant mercy in keeping man in the dark about the future.

A human being cannot remain idle for a single second and even during sleep the mind remains active, is proved by the remembrance of dreams. The effects of all actions cannot be exhausted in one's life-time and there is a carry over of the effects of those actions that are performed at the closing stages of one's life to the next life. As far as the law is concerned, effects of the actions are primary and more important than the time sequence or the body form as these are only secondary. Death bed visions, freak cases of remembrance of previous incarnation, contract with spiritual mediums etc., bear ample testimony to the survival of the soul even after death. Rājājī in his book on *Gītā* says that man evolves himself exactly according to his thoughts and actions and the immortal soul carries on with birth and death cyclically. This, the most important doctrine of the Hindu religion, according to Rājājī, is the application of the law of conservation of energy in the moral sphere. As death is only the obliteration of the human material frame or outer form and not the life energy, the law of Cause and effect in so far as the soul or life-energy is concerned, does not terminate with the destruction of the body. The scriptures clearly lay down the outer limits to man's freedom and man has also been endowed with intelligence and free will to change the effect of his past actions rather than meekly succumb to them as fate-ordained.

All actions which include thoughts, leave impressions (or *Vāsanās)* in one's consciousness and only with strength of will and power of concentration can these impressions be wiped out from one's memory. That is why Hinduism advocates a life of inner

transformation through meditation in the form of practice of *Yoga* as one of the only paths for obtaining release from the bondage to *Karma*. For right living on the human plane, every human being ought to know the operations of the law of *Karma* or the secret of work so as to take up such actions as will be conducive to one's welfare and avoiding actions detrimental to one's interests. To err is human but to persist in erring by following the immoral, unethical and even illegal ways of living shows one's utter lack of concern for one's own spiritual welfare.

A purposeful life is a life full of actions and not renunciation of actions. The very second verse of *Īśāvāsyopaniṣad* says—

"In this world, one should desire to live for hundred years performing actions (ordained by scriptures). Thus, and in no other way, can one be free from the taint of actions."

The *Karma* doctrine is the most comprehensive analysis of the human actions and has high practical bearing even for the day to day living on the human plane. Ignorance of this law is, therefore, inexcusable. All actions proceed from thought as no action can be without motives. The underlying cause of action is fulfilment of desires and it takes a life time of practice of austerity to totally get over temptations and worldly desires and even the wisest do slip while treading the razor's edge. Among the Hindu scriptures, *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā* is the only scripture which deals at great length in simple and understandable language about *Karma* and reveals the paths of *Karma-Yoga* by which the effects of past actions can be got rid of. In Verse 16 of Chapter IV of the *Gītā* the Lord says—

"Even the wise are deluded as to what is action and what is inaction" and proceeds to expound that action, knowing which one can be free from the bondage to actions. The study of *Gītā*, the proper understanding of the purport of its teachings and more importantly, following the *Gītā* way of life in both letter and spirit is the only way out of the bondage to actions. The supreme Lord gives a solemn assurance that even a little bit of effort by way of observance of *Karma-Yoga* has its definite reward in the shape

of being saved from the gravest dangers—"*swalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahatobhayāt*". Living in this world of human affairs one should make sincere efforts to get freed of the effects of ones past as well as future *Karmas*.

Hindu religion which believes in the transmigration of eternal soul till release from bondage, centres around the following three very important or core concepts:

(1) *Ātmā* or transmigrating self.
(2) *Karma*—Actions with reactions.
(3) *Sanātana Dharma*—Eternal laws governing Nature with its Supreme Ruler.

Surrender to the Supreme Ruler giving up all *Dharmas* is the ultimate message of *Gītā* for release from bondage.

If you want peace and happiness, our paramount duty should be to seek the shelter of God with all our being and proceed onwards along the path of peace, relying on His power. We should remember that the Lord's feet constitute the fountain-head from which the stream of peace and happiness flows. What happiness or enjoyments we derive from any other source or by following any other method or by adoring any other deity, emanate from His feet; for the store of happiness is there. And the object, person or deity from whom we get any worldly enjoyment is also, in fact, nothing else but God.

Whom Brahmā, Varuṇa, Indra, Rudra, and the Maruts praise with divine songs; whom the *Sāma* chanters sing by the *Vedas* and their *Aṅgas*, in the *Pada* and *Krama* methods, and by the *Upaniṣads;* whom *Yogīs* see by mind fixed in meditation, to Him going; whose end *Suras* and *Asuras* know not; to that God, all hail !

Science and Sanātana Dharma

—Prof. Siddheshwar Prasad

We are living in an age of global crisis. Everything seems to be in the melting pot. Naturally the people all over the world are desperately in search of peace. But it has become the most elusive commodity. Discontent, tension, violence and conflict are growing and in spite of the best efforts of the governments of the day the world seems to be heading towards the Third World War—the War leading to the destruction of the earth.

But why ? Because everybody pays lip-service to *Dharma* but acts according to his or her prejudices. People forget that jaundiced eyes cannot see things in their true colour and right perspective.

How man can be made to overcome his prejudices ? It is most simple and yet most difficult. Man has to see the Truth and act accordingly. God has given everybody the capacity to see the Truth and lead his life accordingly. For this he will have to develop his will-power.

How *Sanātana Dharma* can be relevant in finding solution to this global crisis ? The basis of the *Sanātana Dharma* is that the Truth is one and the seers call it by different names (*Ṛgveda*.I.164.46). Thus the meeting point of both *Dharma* and Science is Truth as both profess to search Truth.

As has been said, Truth is One. It is One, therefore, it is indivisible. Therefore, the Truth for *Dharma* and the Truth for science cannot be different and contradictory. But why seers call it by different names ? Because Truth has many facets. The same water may assume different forms of water, ice or vapour but is it not the same ? Therefore, it said that the One manifests himself in different forms (*Ṛgveda* VI. 71. 18). The realization of the 'One in many' is the basis of the *Sanātana Dharma* since the days of the *Vedas*. In the *Sanātana Dharma* nothing is above the *Vedas*.

In his *'Sanātana Dharma'* Swāmī Bhāratī Kṛṣṇa Tīrtha has given (P.II.36) four interpretations of the word *'Sanātana'*. I venture to suggest the fifth one.

The most used two *Vedic* words denoting the Reality are *Sat* and *Ṛta*. The Eternal Law of manifestation of *Sat* is *Ṛta* and the *Dharma* which embodies it is *Sanātana* or Eternal *Dharma*. By its very nature *Sanātana Dharma* includes both physical and metaphysical, material and spiritual, aspects of the manifestations of the Truth. *Ṛta* being the eternal law of manifestation, it has been said in the *Vedas* that 'always follow the path of the *Ṛta*' (Y. V. 7.45). Those who follow the path of Ṛta follow the *Sanātana Dharma*, the Eternal law.

2

Historically and sociologically speaking *Sanātana Dharma* has evolved through the ages, like other religions of the world. As the *Bible* is the first as well as the last word for the Christians and as the *Koran* is for the Muhammadans, so are the *Vedas* for the followers of the *Sanātana Dharma*. But the *Vedas* were not revealed to any particular person as were the Books of other religions but they were heard by the Vedic seers and therefore, technically, they are called the *Śrutis*, heard not by one but hundreds. Human history has never again witnessed such a large number of enlightened persons, *Ṛṣis*, who realised the Truth, the Self, *Brahma*. In *Sanātana Dharma*, in Indian tradition, the realization of Self is realization of *Brahma*, knowledge of *Brahma* is knowledge of *Brahmāṇḍa*. Therefore, philosophically and metaphysically, *Advaita* (non-dualism), is the fundamental of the *Sanātana Dharma* which sociologically, leads to the concept of 'World is the family' and 'the universe is one home': (*vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam*' and *'yatra viśwaṁ bhavatyeka nīdam' Y. Veda* 32.8).

Advaita, which is the fundamental basis of the philosophy of the life of the *Sanātana Dharma*, has given Indian tradition the scientific base which no other religion can claim to have. In rare glimpses of rare individuals other *religions* also have come to this point but it could not be their chief current of thought.

Modern science also has come to accept *Advaita* in the form of the world famous formula of Einstein which is known as $E=mc^2$ which means that energy and mass are equivalent and interchangeable which comes to the *Advaita* concept that both the *Nimitta* and the *Upādāna Kāraṇa* is *Brahma*.

Thus, *Advaita* has given *Sanātana Dharma,* nay the world, not only the most scientific philosophy of life but also the most scientific cosmology: the science of the nature, origin and history of the universe. Today no body believes in the Biblical myth that the earth was created about four thousand years ago. Those who used to laugh at the Indian tradition that *Brahmāṇḍa* was created billions of years ago and will exist for billions of years, now find it to be the most scientific view; the scientists have also come to believe in the Indian theory of *Visphota* (Big Bang) * and *Brahmāṇḍa* (Cosmic Egg) Cosmic material unity of the universe, which was originally propounded by the *Ṛṣis* of the *Sanātana Dharma,* now stands vindicated by the latest researches of the modern science, which are known as atomic physics and astro-physics.

3

The philosophical implications of Einstein's theory of $E=mc^2$ has taken us to the *Advaita* of the *Sanātana Dharma* which also means that *Dharma* and science are not opposed and contradictory in the Indian tradition as they have been in the West but here they are complementary and supplementary. This leads us to a non-dualistic world-view which means unity of life interwoven in its perpetual dynamism which corresponds to the *Vedic* and scientific world-view and philosophy of life manifested and enunciated in the form of *Sat* and *Ṛta*.

This Advaitistic, this scientific, world-view has not been popularised because it does not suit the powers that be in any part of the world. But the world will not survive at this cross-road if this world-view is ignored any more.

Here lies the relevance, role and importance of the *Sānātana Dharma*. This is the biggest opportunity and challenge ever faced

* John Gribbin—*In search of the Big Bang.*

by the *Sanātana Dharma* in its long history; if it accepts the challenge of history and avails of the God-sent opportunity, the world may survive, otherwise there is little hope.

What is to be done ?

Although modern science has proved the correctness and the truth of the Advaitic experience of the Vedic seers yet the world-view based on the philosophical implications of *Vedānta* and *Vijñāna* is not allowed to grow and flourish by the vested interests, the statusquoists, the so-called religious fundamentalists and the misled ignorant persons.

Religion without spiritualism, spiritualism without the experience of oneness with the Reality, that is self-realization, is meaningless.

As has been shown, Reality is one and indivisible and dynamic. This is *Vedānta,* this is *Vijñāna,* such being the nature of the Ultimate Truth, a new world-view will have to be developed which will transform the socio-cultural and the politico-economic structures of the human race and also of the environment he lives in. There is no short-cut to the new world order.

The capitalist, the Marxist, the Fundamentalist and all other world-views based on their philosophies and ideologies and also the prevalent forms of religions as practised in the world today, are as anti-spiritual as any could be because none of them works for self-realization, *Ātma-Jñāna.* Therefore, their aims and objects, although outwardly may look different but are unscientific, non-spiritual; unreal and untrue.

The challenge as well as opportunity of the day is that Creator and His Creation cannot remain separated by any design for long. *Sanātana Dharma,* Eternal Law, spiritual truth and scientific truth, *Svārtha* and *Parmārtha,* cannot remain separate and divergent but they have to evolve organically an integrated world-view to form the springboard of both material and spiritual evolution taking the world as a family.

4

Sanātana Dharma had long ago discovered the secret of the

Eternal Law. Without the aid of the modern laboratories and observatories how they were able to accomplish it ? *Śveta. Upa.* (1.3) tells us that *Ṛṣis* accomplished it by devotion to meditation, contemplation and concentration. Since the days of the *Vedas*, Harappa and Mohenjodaro, *Yoga* has been practised and perfected in India as the science of life, the source of all power and knowledge. According to the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (3.26) for ascertaining the meaning of *Vedānta,* purification of one's nature is a must. For meditation, contemplation and concentration man himself is the means, here no external aid is needed. But is 'means' of basic importance in *Sanātana Dharma* only and not in science ? Any student of modern science knows that here also 'means', instrument or conductor, enjoys place of highest importance. Discoveries and researches in modern science have been possible mainly because of availability of better, more sophisticated and more perfect instruments.

But what is the use of all these external aids, to see or to hear better and so on, if simultaneously mind also is not developed ? Along with other aids provided by modern science if modern man does not today possess more evolved mind, he may drive or fly rashly and cause catastrophe in the form of a world-war. No other civilization or society, except the one based on the *Sanātana Dharma,* has ever cared for the evolution of mind and psyche in the form of the Science of *Yoga*. To give only one example, Swāmī Akhilānanda in his classic book, *'Hindu psychology: Its meaning for the West,* has explained its relevance, meaning and role in the context of the modern civilization. In conclusion he has quoted Swāmī Vivekānanda *(Complete Works* I. 257) 'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within, without by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work or worship, or psychic control or philosophy, by one or more or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines or dogmas, or rituals or books or temples, or forms are of secondary details' *(Hindu Psychology* p. 221-22).

5

Before the spread of the Buddhist world-view, as is well known, *Sanātana Dharma* attached equal importance to the growth and development of both *Vidyā* and *Avidyā*, spiritual science and physical science *(Y. Veda* 40.11). And simultaneous realization and knowledge of both was deemed essential for the full growth and perfection of man. *Avidyā* helped in the preservation and growth of the physical body and world and *Vidyā* in the attainment of *Amṛta*, the Immortal. Neglect of the physical world and physical science cost the vitality of the *Sanātana Dharma* which weakened Bharata and was responsible for her subjugation for over a millennium. It was forgotten that 'even the self cannot be won by one who is without strength' (*Muṇḍaka Up*. III. 2. 4). What to speak of preservation of *Dharma* and protection of the Motherland ! According to the *Bhagavadgītā* (II. 2) this ignorance and dejection, is un-Aryan. *Ṛgveda* (IX. 63.5) had called upon to Aryanise, to ennoble, the whole world. The success of the mission depends upon the vitality of the people dedicated to the cause which in turn depends upon the simultaneous integrated development of both *Vidyā* and *Avidyā*, the spiritual and the physical sciences.

On the basis of *Ṛgveda* (VIII.10.3-4) A.C. Bose has observed—'The Divinity maintains itself through Law. This revelation is different from the revelations described in later religions, according to which some physical body appears before a man. Here the singer does not see a person or perceive a physical object; he realises within him that he can see God where he stands—through his Splendour, as manifested in the universe, and through His Law which works in nature and life *(The Call of the Vedas*—p. 188).

Sri Aurobindo was of the view that the balance and harmony in material and spiritual life which was evolved by the *Vedic Ṛṣis* was later on disturbed which ultimately leaned towards renunciation *(Veda-Rahasya* I. p. 48).

How the *sanātana Dharma* can achieve balance and harmony

again ? Bose is of the view that to return then to the *Vedas* is to return to the dynamic view of life characteristic of the *Vedic* age—the Age of Truth —*Satya Yuga (The Call of the Vedas* p.75).

Sanātana Dharma takes an exalted psychological view of man by declaring him son of the Immortal and calling him to hear the message of Truth *(Y. V.* 11.5). Only by sticking to truth man can again have balance and harmony in his material and spiritual life, and can also simultaneously devote to the integrated development of spiritual and physical science. Non-believer *(Nāstika)* is he who kills Truth, which according to the *Veda* is *Brahma (Ṛ.V.* 1.64.46, for details see *Brahma Vijñānopaniṣad* of the author published by Sarvasewā-Saṅgha Varanasi).

The *Sanātana Dharma* began to lose its glory when it started drifting away from the *Vedas. (Lights on the Upaniṣads*— T.V. Kapālī Śastry 91—99). Even the *Bhagavadgītā* (II. 42, 45) seems to be influenced by the stream of drift because it has itself maintained (3. 21) that whatever a great man does is followed by others. Literally it so happened unfortunately in India and outside India, in *Sanātana Dharma* and outside it, people started drifting away from the *Vedas,* resulting in utter neglect of the study of the *Vedas*. We have to blame none but ourselves for such a sorry state of affairs.

In conclusion I would like to reiterate, as explained above, that the basic philosophy of the *Sanātana Dharma,* as embodied in the *Vedas,* can stand the test of modern science, not only today but even tomorrow and can therefore, supplement and complement each other.

The *Vedas* do not believe in purposeless, aimless, action. Therefore, *Sanātana Dharma* will have to guide science not by subjugating, controlling and throttling it (as was done in the middle ages in Europe) but by assisting in the development of human mind and psyche to higher stages and levels as shown in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (3. 2—10) and the *Yoga Sūtra* (4.2) which speaks of higher evolution of species. For fully availing this opportunity provided by history *Sanātana Dharma* will have to uphold the highest standard of conduct, character, broad

mindedness, tolerance, sense of sacrifice and zeal for the fulfilment of the mission. Here I am tempted to quote a *Vedic Mantra* (*Ṛgveda*.9. 73. 6).

"Those that from ancient seats manifested themselves the guides of song and consellors of movement.

From these the eyeless and the deaf have turned a side.

The evil-doers travel not the path of Eternal Law."

(Bose P.286)

This path of Eternal Law is meant for such devotees who harmonise wisdom and valour , spiritual power *(Brahma)* and ruling power *(Kṣatra),* which in the modern context are symbolised by *Sanātana Dharma* and science respectively. The world as much needs strength of both as their harmony. Then only all men may happily live together *(R. V.* 10. 191.4).

Let us arise, awake and achieve our highest ideal*(Kaṭha Upa.* 1. 3. 14). Wherein the universe becomes one house (*Y.V.* 32. 8, *'yatra viśwaṁ bhavati ekanīdam').*

Those who make Me their sweetest abode, their dearest destination, their only refuge, their greatest and their highest goal, and thus surrender all their actions to Me, and with a single, unreserved and unrefractory *Yoga* and with Me always in their mind, adore Me, them, My loving devotees, I deliver swiftly out of the sea of death. They are neither to fear the surging waves of the endless sea nor be afraid of the ship being wrecked or themselves being drowned by the furious storm dashing against. Their only part in the affair is to take their seat, safe in the beautiful unwreckable ship covered over by My grace, and, with all their mind, body and life, look at Me and be delighted to see My divine doings and be merged in the sweet tunes of My flute. I shall be the sailor of their ship and before long (नचिरात्), that is, in this very life, shall sail their ship to the highest bliss beyond the sea of mortal nature.

Veda Sāra

—*Tamraparni K. Narasimhan*

Sanātana Dharma means the Eternal Way of Life. It is rooted in the eternal *Vedas*. The *Vedas* are too voluminous to master in a lifetime. Saints have summarised the essence of the *Vedas* and hence the essence of *Sanātana Dharma* in their teachings. Śrī Madhvācārya points out that the *Vedas* prescribe a two-point programme of duty and devotion. In his *Dvādaśa Stotra* (III. 1), he says—

kuru bhuṅkṣva ca karma nijaṁ niyataṁ
haripāda vinamradhiyā satatam ।
harireva paro harireva guruḥ
harireva jagatpitṛmātṛgatiḥ ॥

"O ! devotees with mind fixed in all humility to the feet of Śrī Hari do your duty as prescribed in the scriptures uninterruptedly and enjoy the fruits thereof according to your merit. Śrī Hari alone is Supreme, Śrī Hari alone is the father, the mother and the refuge of the universe."

Performance of duty is mandatory. But where is the need for devotion ? The *Dvādaśa Stotra* (III.V) answers—

yadi nāmaparo na bhavet sa hariḥ
kathamasya vaśe jagadetadabhūt ।
yadi nāma na tasya vaśe sakalaṁ
kathameva tu nityasukhaṁ na bhavet ॥

"If, indeed, Śrī Hari is not Supreme how did the universe come under His control ? If, verily, the entire universe is not under His control, truly why should not everlasting happiness be its lot ? Our inability to secure eternal happiness is proof for our dependence on a power beyond our control. That Power is indeed Almighty God Śrī Hari."

Śrī Madhva's teaching is based on *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā* which is considered as an *Upaniṣad.* The following extracts from *Gītā* will substantiate the claim. "*mattaḥ parataraṁ nānyatkiñcidasti*" (VII.7) 'I am the highest one. There is nothing higher than Me' so asserts Śrī Kṛṣṇa, an incarnation of Śrī Hari. "*Pitāhamasya jagato mātā*" (IX. 17) "I am the Father of this world and the Mother" so says the Lord. According to Śrī Madhva the call: "*sarvadharmān parityajya*" (XVIII. 66) to Arjuna to abandon all his duties and obligations, is only in terms of relinquishing their fruit and not the absolute relinquishment of all responsible obligations. In his *Gītā Bhāṣya* Śrī Madhva asks the pertinent question, *kaṭhamanyathā yuddhavidhiḥ ?* 'Otherwise, how could the Lord's injunction laid on Arjuna to fight to the finish' (II. 37, III.30, IX.34) be explained ? Further—

niyatasya tu saṁnyāsaḥ karmaṇo nopapadyate ।
mohāttasya parityāgastāmasaḥ parikīrtitaḥ ॥
(XVIII. 7)

enjoins that ommission of actions prescribed in the scriptures is neither desirable nor possible; such abandonment through delusion is said to be *Tāmasika.* So "*yastu karmaphalatyāgī sa tyāgītyabhidhīyate*" (XVIII. 11) "he that renounces the fruits of action is said to be a relinquisher". Thus one has to perform one's duties with single minded devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Akṣobhya Tīrtha, a direct disciple of Śrī Madhva has elucidated further the essence of the *Vedas* in his small work called *Veda Sāra.* This work is also attributed to Śrī Vyāsa Tīrtha and Śrī Vādirāja.

smara kṛṣṇaṁ bhaja hariṁ nama viṣṇuṁ śriyācyutam ।
tyaja kāmaṁ jahi krodhaṁ jahi mohaṁ bhavālayam ॥

"Meditate on Śrī Kṛṣṇa, worship Śrī Hari, submit yourself to Śrī Viṣṇu, take refuge in the imperishable Śrī Acyuta, eschew lust and anger the twin causes of *Saṁsāra*".

śṛṇu śaurikathāḥ puṇyāḥ paśya śrīpativigraham ।
jighra śrīpādatulasīḥ spṛśa vaikuṇṭha vallabham ॥

"Listen to the auspicious deeds of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, behold the form

of the Lord of Śrī Lakṣmī, smell the fragrance of the Tulasī leaves offered to the holy feet of the Lord and feel the Lord of *Vaikuṇṭha*".

bhuṅkṣva keśavanaivedyaṁ tiṣṭha mādhavamandire ।
japa nārāyaṇamantraṁ paṭha tannāmamaṅgalam ॥

"Partake food offered to Śrī Keśava, remember that Śrī Mādhava is the abode of all, repeat the Nārāyaṇa *Mantra,* recite His auspicious names".

pāhi prapannajanatāṁ brūhi tathyaṁ hitaṁ nṛṇām ।
dehi kāṅkṣitamarthibhyo yāhi sajjanasaṅgatim ॥

"Protect the supplicants, speak wholesome truth to men, give alms to the needy, be in the company of good men.

kuru bhūtadayāṁ nityaṁ cara dharmamaharniśam ।
jānīhi nityamātmānamavehyanyaddhi naśvaram ॥

"Always be compassionate to all living beings, follow *Dharma* day and night, always meditate on God and remember that everything else is transitory."

pañca ślokānimānśaśvat paṭha dhāraya cintaya ।
etāvān sarvavedārthaḥ samāsena nirūpitaḥ ॥

"Always read these five couplets, retain them in memory and reflect upon them. They constitute the essence of the *Vedas* put in a nutshell.

Iti Śrī Akṣobhya Tīrtha viracitaṁ Vedasāram
Thus ends the Veda Sāra composed by Śrī Akṣobhya Tīrtha.
Śrī Kṛṣṇārpaṇamastu

Is spiritual illumination possible without a preceptor ? Or, again, is it possible to acquire wisdom without dispassion ? Or, as the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas* declare, can one attain happiness without devotion to Śrī Hari ? Again, dear Garuḍa can one find peace without innate content ? Can a boat ever float without water even though you strain every nerve till your last breath ?

—*Mānasa* (VII. 89—A-B)

Importance of Yajña in Sanātana Dharma

—*Dr. V. P. Tewari*

Fire is very essential and useful in our life, therefore it has been worshipped in many religions of the world. Fire is significant not only in social life but in *Sanātana Dharma* also since without fire the *Yajña* cannot be performed. The process of *Yajña* has been in practice from time immemorial. Besides in *Vedas* importance of *Yajña* has unanimously been accepted by scriptures—*Upaniṣads*, *Purāṇas*, *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* etc. The purpose of performing *Yajña* and rituals has been the satisfaction and fulfilment of all materialistic desires and attainment of salvation. Other than that, the *Yajñas* have been included in the normal daily life in the form of *Havana* in various ceremonies such as birth, death, *Muṇḍana*, marriage, *Gṛha-Praveśa* etc. Śrī Haidākhāna Bābā performed *Yajña* every-day and hundreds of *Yajñas* were performed such as *Jagadambā Mahāyajña* of nine days during *Navarātra* and three days *Mahā Rudrayajñas*. Bābājī played a great role in reviving the old tradition of performing *Yajñas* which were forgotten in the light of present day modern life.

In the *Kali* age the worldly man regards *Yajña* as primitive custom of burning materials in fire, but this mentality of the worldly man is illusionary for a person who is not familiar with the procedure of agriculture, regards the pouring of valuable seeds in the fire as a foolish attempt. But the wise farmer knows that this will fetch him many-fold rich dividends in due course of time in the form of a bumper crop. According to the material science, the substances mixed with soil increase thousand times and mixed with water much more than that, when mixed with fire increase million times. Doctors know that the method of injecting medicine into body is more effective and gives quick results than the oral method of giving medicine because the medicine becomes subtle and mingles with the blood stream quickly and

easily. Similarly, the substances burnt in the *Yajñas* become subtle and their potency increases and are very useful as compared to their original whole form. No one can eat copper, silver, gold etc., but when burnt, their ash is used for making *Ayurvedic* medicines.

The *Yajña* is an essential part of every form of *Sādhanā* in worship of God. *Ṛṣis* have said—*Bhagavān Yajñapuruṣa* (God and *Yajña* are inseparable Brahma) is established in *Yajña*. *Yajña* is an essential part of any worship of God, the whole creation is like a *Yajña*. The sages and elevated souls have praised the values of *Yajña*. The following four have been the chief uses of *Yajña*.

1. Gods are Pleased by Yajña—

Gods are pleased by the *Havi*—the *Yajña* offerings. The offerings are given by *Vaidika Mantras* and that offerings are received by the *Devatās* to whom they are offered by *Mantras*. Satisfied with the *Yajña* the Gods give the desired things and blessings to us.

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।
परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥

(*Bhagavadgītā* III. 11)

"Foster the gods through this (sacrifice); and let the gods foster you. By fostering one another disinterestedly, you will attain the highest good."

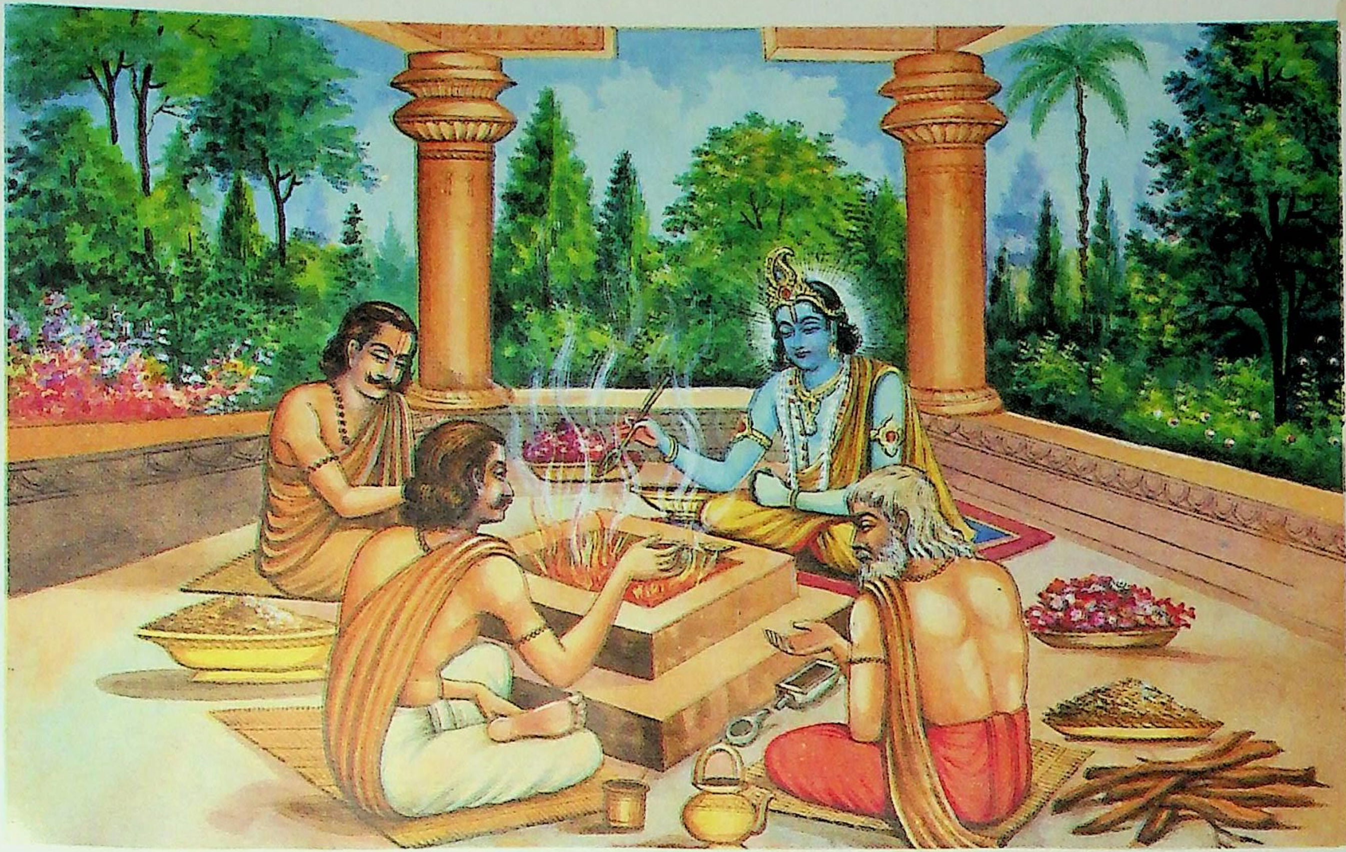
इष्टान्भोगान्हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।
तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥

(*Bhagavadgītā* III. 12)

"Fostered by sacrifice, the gods will surely bestow on you unasked, all the desired enjoyments. He who enjoys the gifts bestowed by them, without giving in return, is undoubtedly a thief."

2. Yajña—The cause of rainfall—

The effect of big *Yajñas* is to create upthrust of the air. The lower air when warms up becomes lighter, moves upwards and causes rains. If there is no upthrust of the air, in spite of thick clouds there cannot be rains. There used to be rain after *Mahāyajñas* performed by Haidākhāna Bābā. Good rains yield bumper crops and high



Gṛhastha Āśrama

yields, resulted in the solution of food problem.

Ghee particles freeze faster than water particles in contact with clouds resulting in quick rains. These days scientists have been successful in creating artificial rains. The basic principle is that there is no reason why it should not rain when the coolness is created below the clouds. Our ancient *Ṛṣis* knew this principle long long ago. This quality is present in the offering of ghee in the *Yajña*.

3. Yajña eradicates diseases—

It has been found by present day scientists that the substances used in *Yajña* offerings such as dry fruits, coconut, raisins, *Agaru, Guggula, Keśara, Kastūrī* etc., are potent in controlling disease, epidemics by their germicidal effect. These substances when burnt in the fire of *Yajña* become subtle and their potency is increased than in the whole form thus become very effective in controlling diseases.

4. Yajña in controlling environmental pollution—

Yajña was considered to be the best and the cheapest means of overcoming environmental pollution. *Guggula* is very potent germ-killer, it is effective in killing all kinds of germs. Camphor is also a germ-killer. It has been proved by modern scientists that the *Yajña* is fully scientific when examined from all respects. Many gases which come out of burning of the substance purify the environment. *Yajña* brings rainfall which flood off the rubbish and several types of decomposed plant and animal materials; thus purifying the environment.

Yajña in Vedas—

All the four *Vedas* are divided into three portions—*Karma Kāṇḍa, Upāsanā Kāṇḍa* and *Jñāna Kāṇḍa. Karma Kāṇḍa* is the largest of the three and consists mainly of *Yajña Mantras,* thus we see that the main topic of the *Vedas* is *Yajña*.

Yajña is responsible for the welfare of the individual, society and the whole world and that it is not possible to perform *Yajñas* without *Vedas. Vedas* are responsible for the welfare of the mankind through *Yajña. Vedic Yajña* only can lead to the path of peace and happiness in the world. Mere crying of the world

leaders over the issue will be futile unless principles of *Sanātana Dharma* are followed in essence. *Vedas* and scriptures have advocated that the whole life itself is like a *Yajña*. If the man's actions are performed according to *Śāstras* then whole life process become a *Yajña*.

Yajña in Bhagavadgītā—

In *Gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa by His lotus-like lips has sung the glory and importance of *Yajña*.

यज्ञदानतपः कर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत्।
यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम्॥

(XVIII. 5)

"Acts of sacrifice, gift and penance should not be relinquished; they must be performed at all events. For sacrifice, gift and penance performed by wise men, purify the heart."

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः।
अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक्॥

(III. 10)

"Having created mankind along with the spirit of sacrifice at the beginning of creation, the creator Brahmā, said to them. You shall multiply through this; may this yield the enjoyment you seek."

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते।
यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः॥

(XVII. 11)

"The sacrifice, which is offered as enjoined by scriptural ordinance, by men having no desire for fruit, under the firm belief that it is a duty which must be performed, is the *Sāttvika* type of sacrifice."

अभिसंधाय तु फलं दम्भार्थमपि चैव यत्।
इज्यते भरतश्रेष्ठ तं यज्ञं विद्धि राजसम्॥

(XVII. 12)

"That sacrifice, however, which offered with a view to fruit and also for the sake of ostentation, know it to be *Rājasika*, Arjuna."

विधिहीनमसृष्टान्नं मन्त्रहीनमदक्षिणम्।
श्रद्धाविरहितं यज्ञं तामसं परिचक्षते॥

(XVII.13)

"That sacrifice is said to be *Tāmasika,* which is without sanction of the scriptures, in which no food is distributed, no sacred formula is chanted, and no fees are paid (to the officiating priests), and which is devoid of faith."

The following fourteen different kinds of *Yajña* have been advocated in *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā*.

1. *Dravya Yajña*—Sacrifice with material possession (IV. 28).
2. *Daiva Yajña*—Sacrifice in the shape of worship of gods (IV. 25).
3. *Jñānendriya Yajña*—Sacrifice to the senses into the fire of discipline (IV. 26).
4. *Viṣaya Yajña*—Use of senses according to the *Śāstras* (IV. 26).
5. *Svādhyāya-jñāna Yajña*—Sacrifice in the shape of wisdom through the study of sacred texts (IV. 28).
6. *Prāṇa Yajña*—Sacrifice by practice of *Prāṇa* breath into the *Apāna* (IV. 29).
7. *Prānāpāna Yajña*—Sacrifice through breath control (IV. 29).
8. *Apāna Yajña*—To offer *Apāna* into the *Prāṇa* (IV. 29).
9. *Prāṇāyāma Yajña*—Control of *Prāṇa* and *Apāna* through regulated diet (IV. 30).
10. *Yoga Yajña*—Sacrifice through the practice of *Yoga (Niṣkāma* and *Aṣṭāṅga)* (IV. 28).
11. *Tapa Yajña*—Sacrifice in the shape of austerities (IV. 28).
12. *Japa Yajna*—Sacrifice through Japa (IX. 25).
13. *Indriyaprāṇa—Karma Yajña*—Sacrifice of the functions of senses and vital airs into the fire of Yoga, in the shape of self control, kindled by wisdom (IV. 27).
14. *Jñāna or Brahma Yajña*—Realisation of *Brahma* in everything and realising *Brahma* in every act of life (IV. 24-25).

Salient features of Yajña—

1. *Yajña* leads to peace and happiness in the family.
2. *Yajña* provides self control.
3. *Yajña* gives right thinking directing towards *Dharma* and *Sāttvika Karmas.*
4. By *Yajña* man becomes free from illusion.
5. *Yajña* makes one free from disease, one becomes learned, victorious and wealthy and blessed by son and many other useful possessions.

6. Heaps of bad *Karmas* and vices are eradicated by *Yajña*.
7. *Yajña* is a source of the four *Puruṣārtha—Dharma, Artha, Kāma* and *Mokṣa*.
8. By the performance of *Yajña* the man becomes great personage.
9. *Yajña* is responsible for timely rains, hence good crops and high yields of fruits etc.
10. *Yajña* controls environmental pollution.
11. *Yajña* is able to control disease epidemics.
12. *Yajña* is a means of pleasing gods, the people then are blessed by them in return.
13. *Yajña* leads to happiness and peace in the country.
14. God realisation can be achieved by *Yajña*.
15. Regular performance of *Yajña* leads to liberation.
16. The performance of *Yajña* leads to the liberation of parental ancestors *(Pitara)*.

These days the *Vaidika Yajña's* have almost disappeared. In spite of that whatever valuable parts have remained they are useful for the benefit of man, society and the country.

The world is full of miseries and sufferings. If you want to get rid of the pains and afflictions of this worldly existence *(Saṁsāra)* you must practise meditation. Meditation is the pathway to divinity. It is the royal road to the kingdom of *Brahma*. It is a mysterious ladder which reaches from earth to heaven, from error to truth, from darkness to light, from pain to bliss, from restlessness to abiding peace, from ignorance to knowledge, from mortality to immortality. Meditation leads to knowledge of the Self which brings about eternal peace and supreme bliss. Meditation prepares you for the integral experiences of direct intuitive knowledge.

—*Swami Sivananda*

In the *Dwāpara* age the Lord is of a dark brown complexion, remains clad in yellow silk, wields (in His arms) His own weapons and emblems (viz., the conch, discus, mace and lotus), wears the Kaustubha gem and is distinguished by the marks of Śrīvatsa (a curl of white hair on the right side of His bosom) etc.

—*Bhāgavata* (XI. 5. 27)

Nature and Importance of Dharma

—*Swami Sri Karapatriji Maharaja*

The atom infused with the impressions of good and evil actions, is *Dharma*—this is the view of the *Vivasanas* (the Jainas). The *Vāsanā* or impression derived from the series of momentary *Vijñānas* is *Dharma*—this is the view cherished by the Buddhists. Liberation in living state through the restraint on the dispositions of mind caused by the knowledge or *Yoga* etc., is *Dharma*—this is the opinion of the followers of the *Sāṅkhya* and *Yoga* schools. The special quality acquired by doing the prescribed acts and refraining from the forbidden ones, is *Dharma,* this is the opinion of the followers of the *Nyāya* school. *Apūrva* (i.e., the unforeseen virtue) itself is the *Dharma,* so say Prabhākara and other *Mimāṁsakas*. Obeying the injunctions of the *Veda* is *Dharma*—this is the view of the *Mīmāṁsakas* who follow Jaimini. Eligibility of being proved by the injunctions of the *Veda* is *Dharma* if it protects from strong evils and effects auspicious results. This indeed is the sum and substance of all. The learned scholars hold this all-comprehensive view.

The *Dharma* enjoined by the *Veda* is twofold owing to its being either of the nature of *Pravṛtti* (i.e., activity) or of *Nivṛtti* (i.e., renunciation).

द्वाविमावथ पन्थानौ यत्र वेदाः प्रतिष्ठिताः ।
प्रवृत्तिलक्षणो धर्मो निवृत्तौ च सुभाषितः ॥

(*Brahma Purāṇa* 237.6, *Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva* 241. 6)

These have been also expressed by the terms *Jñāna (Sāṅkhya) Yoga* and *Karmayoga*. The ascetics Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatsujāta, Śukadeva and others are the followers of *Nivṛtti Dharma.** Other religious men are the followers of *Pravṛtti*

* These examples may be understood more clearly by a perusal of the stories in the *Mahābhārata Śāntiparva*, 143—149, *Anuśāsanaparva*, chapter I,etc.

Dharma. Any religious act which is devoid of these two kinds of *Dharma,* should not be performed, even if it may be efficacious in bestowing great fortune such as the sovereignty, affluence and the like, because later on it produces results which are by no means auspicious—

धर्मादपेतं यत्कर्म यद्यपि स्यान्महाफलम् ।
न तत्सेवेत मेधावी न तद्धितमिहोच्यते ॥

(*Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva* 293.8)

Such an act goes on burning away behind it the ramifications of the doer's life along with its roots—

नाधर्मश्चरितो लोके सद्यः फलति गौरिव ।
शनैरावर्तमानस्तु कर्तुर्मूलानि कृन्तति ॥
मूलानि च प्रशाखाश्च दहन् समधिगच्छति ।

(*Manusmṛti* 4. 172, *Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva* 95. 17-18)

He, who derides *Dharma* and the religious persons challenging *Dharma*'s very existence, is bound to meet destruction. *

न धर्मोऽस्तीति मन्वानः शुचीनवहसन्निव ॥
अश्रद्दधानश्च भवेद् विनाशमुपगच्छति ।

(*Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva* 95. 19-20)

A man (or even a country) devoid of *Dharma* may sometimes grow on immensely like Rāvaṇa, Hiraṇyakaśipu, Duryodhana and others, but at last they cannot escape the onslaughts of horrible destruction.

अधर्मेणैधते तावत् ततो भद्राणि पश्यति ।
ततः सपत्नाञ्जयति समूलस्तु विनश्यति ॥

(*Manusmṛti* 4.174, *Mahābhārata, Vanaparva* 94.4, and *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa, Prakṛti Khaṇḍa* 14.26)

Therefore *Artha* (i. e., wealth) and *Kāma* (desire) devoid of *Dharma* should be forsaken by all means.

* In this connection, the detailed story of the dialogue between Nandabhadra and Satyavrata may be seen in the *Skandapurāṇa, Māheśvarakhaṇḍa.*

परित्यजेदर्थकामौ यौ स्यातां धर्मवर्जितौ ।

(*Manusmṛti* 4. 176, *Viṣṇupurāṇa* 3. 11. 7, Kauṭalīya *Arthaśāstra* I.7.8)

Dharma alone is helper and protector everywhere—

धर्म एको मनुष्याणां सहायः परिकीर्तितः ।

(*Brahmapurāṇa* 127. 9)

धर्मस्तमनु गच्छति ।

(*Manusmṛti* IV. 241)

वने रणे शत्रुजलाग्निमध्ये
रक्षन्ति पुण्यानि पुराकृतानि ।

(*Nītiśataka* 99, *Pu. Si.* I. 53)

Artha (wealth), *Kāma* (pleasure), *Mokṣa* (liberation) and all sorts of fortunes emanate from *Dharma*. *Dharma* indeed is the cause of all the *Puruṣārthas* (i.e., objects of human life).

(*Manu. Cāṇakyasūtra* I. 20).

The internally pure, virtuous happiness, rather bliss experienced in the smallest particle of *Dharma* is nowhere traceable in *Artha* (wealth) and *Kāma* (pleasure) etc.* One should therefore set one's mind in *Dharma*. The life of man devoid of *Dharma* is indeed most miserable.

अनित्यानि शरीराणि विभवो नैव शाश्वतः ।
नित्यं संनिहितो मृत्युः कर्तव्यो धर्मसंग्रहः ॥

(*Vikramārka. Cari* 13. 1, *Garuḍapurāṇa, Dharmasāroddhāra, Pañcatantra* II. 94).

"The bodies are perishable, the wealth is not everlasting. The death is always quite near. One should therefore accummulate *Dharma*".

पुलाका इव धान्येषु पूत्यण्डा इव पक्षिषु ।
मशका इव मर्त्येषु येषां धर्मो न कारणम् ॥

(*Mahābhārta, Śāntiparva* 322. 7, *Pañcatantra* III. 397)

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* देवता ब्राह्मणाः सन्तो यक्षा मानुषचारणाः ।
धार्मिकान् पूजयन्तीह न धनाढ्यान् न कामिनः ॥
धने सुखकला काचिद् धर्मे तु परमं सुखम् ॥

(*Mahābhārata Śāntiparva* 271.55-56)

Therefore *Dharma* only should be practised.

धर्मेणापिहितो धर्मो धर्ममेवानुवर्तते ।
धार्मिकेण कृतो धर्मो धर्ममेवानुवर्तते ॥

(*Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva* 193. 28)

He who is incapable of practising *Dharma* with his physique or wealth, should at least ever have in his mind the welfare of all beings. This is called as *Mānasa* (mental) *Dharma,* which is the root of all *Dharma.*

मानसं सर्वभूतानां धर्ममाहुर्मनीषिणः ।
तस्मात् सर्वेषु भूतेषु मनसा शिवमाचरेत् ॥

(*Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva* 193. 31)

Unity is knowledge, diversity is ignorance. This knowledge is your birthright. I have not to teach it to you. There never were different religions in the world. We are all destined to have salvation, whether we will it or not. You have to attain it in the long run and become free, because it is your nature to be free. We are already free, only we do not know it, and we do not know what we have been doing. Throughout all religious systems and ideals is the same morality; one thing only is preached—"Be unselfish,love others."

—*Swami Vivekananda*

He alone is omniscient and accomplished, he alone is wise, he alone is an ornament of the globe, learned and munificent, he alone is pious and he the saviour of his race, whose mind is devoted to the feet of Śrī Rāma. He alone is perfect in correct behaviour and most sagacious, he alone has thoroughly grasped the conclusion of the *Vedas,* and he alone is a seer, a man of erudition and staunch in battle, who adores the Hero of Raghu's line in a guileless spirit. Blessed is the land where flows the celestial stream (the Gaṅgā); blessed is the wife who observes a vow of fidelity to her husband. Blessed is the monarch who administers justice; blessed is the *Brāhmaṇa* who swerves not from his duty. Blessed is the wealth which is used to the best advantage; blessed is the intellect and ripe too which is devoted to pious acts. Blessed is the hour which is spent in communion with saints; blessed is the birth in which one practises unceasing devotion to the twice-born (the *Brāhmaṇas*).

—*Mānasa* (VII. 127. 1—8)

Religion of the Indus Civilization

—Dr. P. V. Pathak

The Indus civilization constitutes the great heritage of our country. Spread over the vast area of continental dimensions there flourished a civilization 5000 years ago which was interunited with different regions within by many socio-religious and cultural bonds and it passed on the legacy to the present religious socio-cultural milieu which is known as *Sanātana Dharma (SD)*. There are many customs and religious practices practised by the present Hindu society which can be traced back to the Indus culture period.

Indus-Sarasvatī Civilization—

Having flourished in the valley of two great rivers, namely the Indus and the lost river Sarasvatī, the civilization can aptly be called as Indus-Sarasvatī Civilization. This is evident from the hundreds of the Indus-culture sites located on the banks of the desiccated beds of Sarasvatī extending to the Rann of Kaccha. The technique of landsat imagery has enabled us to identify the ancient beds of the river. It used to merge in sea in the Rann of Kaccha. The number of Indus-culture sites in the region along shifting beds of the Sarasvatī and the Bahavalpur district currently in Pakistan is considerably higher than anywhere else. Although very few sites have been excavated, it appears that the culture flourished mainly in the region of Sarasvatī valley. So it will be appropriate to call it as Indus-Sarasvatī Civilization (ISC).

It was on the banks of the sacred river Sarasvatī that the *Vedic* seers perceived the hymns of the *Vedas*. Even today the memory of the river Sarasvatī evokes the pious feelings and reverence for the great Vedic seers in the mind of an average Indian. The things could not have been different at the times when hundreds of small and big settlements of ISC people were flourishing on the banks

of the river, whom they praised—*"ambitame nadītame devitame sarasvatī"* (*Ṛgveda* II. 41. 16).

Three basic features—

Every religion or spiritual tradition has three basic features. While all the religions are meant for spiritual development of the individual followers, it has mundane aspects associated with it. The first part is sublime, transcending the worldly life and day to day affairs. This is philosophical and spiritual part of the religion. The second aspect is the manifestation of the religion in day to day practice. It concerns with mundane things of life and governs the behavioural aspects. It is called as *Ācāra Dharma.* The third aspect being certain rites and rituals performed for personal gains. It is a sort of little tradition. ISC has all these three aspects manifesting the *SD.*

The Spiritual aspects—

For the followers of *SD,* the Hindus, this aspect concerns with the unity of the individual soul (Ātmā) with the universal soul (*Brahmā*). Right from the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads* till the modern saints and philosophers, this unity has been the main goal of human life, a part of the divine mission.

In *SD* the *Yoga* is a way to Godhood. It is discipline of mind and the body ultimately leading to self realization. *Yoga* was practised during the ISC times. It is evident from the terracotta figurines from Mohenjodaro depicting *Yogic Āsanas.*

The famous Paśupati seal from Mohenjodaro is pictorial representation of the *Atharva Vedic* hymn (II. 34). The presiding deity of the hymn being Paśupati, the lord of beasts who is described in the hymn as the lord of both biped and quadrupeds and is united with his creation through mind and vision. This union is possible only through the *Yogic* trance. This also points to the very basic philosophical enunciation of *SD.* '*sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ brahma*' i.e., all the manifest and unmanifest is *Brahma.* The deity on the seal Paśupati is seen to be sitting in a *Yogic* posture and there are no less than eight such seals which show its popularity. It is evident from this that ISC people were not only familiar but were practising *Yoga* as spiritual discipline.

As far the recitation of the *AV* hymn (II. 34) it was being recited while taking the sacrificial animal to the sacrificial post i.e., *Yūpa*. And at many locations of ISC sites the sacrificial altars with ash and bovine bone remains have been excavated. Notable among these are a set of five altars at Kalibangan and set of three altars at Vagad in Gujrat.

Yajña was very basic ritual performed by the *SD* followers to achieve rapport with gods through their messenger on the earth i.e., Agni.

The fire worship in different forms was prevalent in almost all the societies all over the world since the ancient times. But the mode of fire-worship *Yajña* as followed in ISC is akin to the Vedic culture. It will be interesting to study the constructional aspects of the ISC altars and compare them with both the *Śrauta* and *Smārta* modes of *Yajña* performance.

One of the foremost scholars of the ISC Dr. Iravatham Mahādevan has given the interpretation of few symbols on the Indus seals. Majority of the Indus seals (more than 75%) carry picture of horse like animal with a single horn unicorn the *Ekaśṛnga*. Invariably in front of this animal, picture of a pot supported on stand is engraved. Mahādevan has referred to several hymns from *Ṛgveda, Maṇḍala* IX which point to the ritual of extracting and preparation of soma juice. It describes the droplets of *Soma* passing through empty space through thousands of streams. The cult object on unicorn seals ! A sacred filter ? In Indus valley to Mekong Delta (Mahādevan, Iravatham (1985), Ed. Noboru Karashima, Madras).

The *Ṛgveda* also refers to *Hiraṇyaśṛnga Aśva* i.e., horse with a golden horn. (*Ṛgveda* I. 163. 9). It is this animal-unicorn which is accredited to India by several foreign travellers in the ancient times. According to Mahādevan, the pot on stand in front of unicorn depicts the *Soma* extraction filter with droplets of oozing *Soma* and a few symbols of the Indus script depicting Indra, the supreme deity in the *Ṛgveda,* holding *Soma*.

This leads us to very startling conclusion. That being, ISC society was integral part of the so-called Aryan culture.

In the *Vedic* literature we do not find the mention of idol worship. The same is the case with ISC. They were excellent artists. There are many steatite statues, hundreds of steatite and bronze seals with exquisite drawings. But in the excavations carried over more than the last seven decades at several ISC sites, so far there is not a single statue which can be called as an idol of a deity. While in the civilizations of the west, i.e., in Egypt, Mesopotamia which flourished simultaneously along with ISC there are idols and pictures of gods and goddesses. So non-availability of the god or goddess idol at the ISC sites is in full consonence with the *Vedic* practice.

Some scholars are of the opinion that the female terracotta figures found at ISC sites are the mother goddess idols. The present author however does not agree with the proposition. Being such an advanced civilization with exquisite craftsmanship in many trades, namely, ornament-making, seal engraving, pottery etc., why should they make mother goddess figures in such an haphazard manner ? Those are not the mother goddess statues but dolls for female kids. While the typical mother goddess doll and pictures in the west are of ladies with oversized breasts, pot bellies, a sign of either lacting mothers or pregnant ladies, the dolls of the ISC are those of supine young ladies, over ornamented, out to entice young men. They are certainly the dolls for female kids.

This proposition is further reinforced by the recent findings at Dholavīra in the Rann of Kaccha. Along with the female statue the set of miniature kitchen utensils was found at one spot. It shows that it must have belonged to a girl, just as today's girls engage themselves with miniature utensils.

ISC life style accord to SD—

The outward manifestation of spiritual life is through day to day life style. There is great importance given to daily bath and ablutions to be performed in *SD* way of life. ISC society too followed it. The great bath at Mohenjodaro has special significance. Situated at a prime location in the city it could have been a centre of learning, an *Āśrama* and the people living

around taking daily bath there; the covered varandah and rooms around the bath being reserved for performing daily rituals after the bath.

In many houses at Mohenjodaro there are well built wells, bath rooms with proper channels to let the domestic effluent into the main drain line. This points to the great importance attached by the ISC society to daily bath and cleanliness of the surrounding area. The tradition continues till today that an average Hindu takes bath early in the morning and performs certain rituals. The tradition continued unhindered over last thousands of years.

The *Aśvattha* tree, *Pīpala* (ficus religiosa) has special importance in *SD*. Right from the *Vedic* literature till today the *Pīpala* tree commands special respect in the social setting. It is a sacred tree. On several hundred pot sherds at many a ISC sites *Pīpala* leaves, and branches with *Pīpala* leaves are painted. This points to the fact that even in those days *Pīpala* tree was revered, and throughout the period of existence of ISC centuries together.

Similar is the case with *Svastika* symbol. In the ISC this symbol was painted on many pots and pot sherds and inlay engraved on steatite stone pieces. And even today in India, the *Svastika* symbol is printed on wedding cards, on account books and at the main entry of a house.

Among the animal species painted on the earthen utensils, pictures of peacock are frequently found. In the *Vedic* literature peacock has special significance according to Asko Parpola being itself Lord Varuṇa who looks at his creation i.e., universe through thousands of eyes for guarding the world order *Ṛta*. The national bird of India is peacock. In Rajasthan, especially, this bird is domesticated and never killed. Since the *Paurāṇika* times it is carrier of the goddess Sarasvatī, the deity of learning.

There was custom of the burial of dead in ISC. In most cases the buried skeletons are found to be laid in north south direction with legs pointing to the south. As the *Paurāṇika* story about the birth of Lord Gaṇeśa goes that the south was considered to be the direction of the death and the dead body in a Hindu household is laid on ground with legs pointing to the south.

As of today people do not sleep pointing legs to the south. The belief that the south was ominous direction can therefore be traced back to the ISC period.

The Script Decipherment—

The ISC script yet remains to be unequivocally deciphered. Some scholars treated it to be of *Draviḍian* origin, while some think it to be of the *Saṁskṛta* origin. While the *Draviḍian* correlations have not gained further sound footing, the trend is emerging decidedly on the Saṁskṛtic and the Vedic origins. Prominent among them being Dr. S. R. Rao, famous for his excavations of the dockyard at Lothal in Gujarata and excavations of the Dwaraka. Based on the semetic script parallels he identified the phonemes of the Indus script. He has further claimed that the Indus script symbols can be read as roots of *Saṁskṛta* verbs and Vedic names. P. N. Māthura of University of Wales based on Rao's interpretation has identified the nomes deciphered by Rao to be in the lineage of Lord Rāma i.e., *Sūrya Vaṁśa.* Subhāśa C. Kak of Louisiana State University who made computer decoding of the Indus script has found its correlation with the *Brāhmī* script. The present author too has correlated the Indus seals with *AV* hymns.

This trend, as is emerging, though has not unequivocally settled the question of ISC script decipherment, nevertheless is leading towards establishing correlation with the tradition, literature and mythology of *SD*.

No Need for Document—

It is said that in ancient India great importance was attached to the word of mouth. Once a promise was uttered it could not be denied. It has special importance in the case of monetory and business transactions. In those days when a rupee had value worth hundreds, hundreds of rupee worth transactions were carried out by mere word of mouth and the commitments were strictly adhered to, so much so that no written documents were made in most of the cases. This tradition is attested by many a foreign tourists who visited India in the ancient times. We therefore find very few records of the business transactions from

the ancient period. ISC was no exception to this ancient tradition.

The ISC people were excellent business men, who travelled to the western civilizations in the middle east exporting items like ornaments, copper goods, peacocks, steatite objects with beautiful engravings. The Indus empire too had spread over the continental area with uniform weights and measures all over. Some of the goods and seals in the ISC can be traced back to the middle east. Then there are huge grainaries at several ISC sites including that at Mehergarh near Quetta. This site again dates back to many thousand years in the pre-ISC period. The requirement of grainary for town dwelling population implies proper records of transactions in food grain collection.

All these points to highly commercial orientation of the business and administration set up needing proper calculation and book keeping. But with all these complexities prevailing they did not evolve documentation system of record keeping for long duration i.e., say engravings on steatite which was abundantly available or on burnt bricks or terracotta plates.

It was that they did not have script or means to record. There are more than two thousand steatite seals found so far. They are beautifully carved with symbols but they cannot be certainly identified as business transaction documents. There too it is not that they were not aware of such documents being made in the west where baked brick, the pictures etc., carry the details of business transactions in many cases.

The ISC society did not feel it necessary to evolve system for long term preservation of business transactions although the culture contained to exist through hundreds of years. It was because they followed the tradition of keeping the word of mouth. And that is the contrast between the cultures of the orient and the occident.

The little Tradition—

In the vedic tradition, *Atharva Veda* can be classified as little tradition, for it was not accorded equality of status with the other three *Vedas*, because it deals with many a mundane things of life and to a certain extent what can be called as white magic chants and rituals.

The present author has interpreted many Indus seals as pictorial representation of the *Atharva Veda* hymns. In the recent issue of the research journal *Purātattva* (Vol. 22,1992 pp. 59—64) the present author has interpreted the famous seal of three forms and seven figures as representation of the hymn (*Atharva Veda* IV. 37). This hymn was chanted during pulping and spraying of the extract of the foul smelling plant species known as *Ajaśṛṅgī* (onida pinnata). It was done to ward off the evil spirits of *Gandharvas* and *Apsarās*.

Another seal interpreted by the author is the man and the tiger seal. In the ancient times people were required to travel through thick forests where there was possibility of loosing tracks, being attacked by decoits and fierce animals etc., the *Atharva Veda* (IV.3) was chanted to overcome these problems. The same hymn is depicted on the seal. The reference to the *Soma* and Indra in the hymn is shown by two human figures on the seal.

Atharva Veda is full of references to the various medicinal plants and trees. On the Indus seals too we find many plants and trees engraved. It will be interesting to draw parallels between the *Atharva Veda* plants and the plants engraved on the Indus seals. One can confirm the engraved creepers on some Indus seals being *Soma Vallī* in the Vedic times.

Śiva Mahādeva with hoodspread cobras flanking on either side of the deity is engraved on two Indus seals. Thus the legend of Śiva's having acquired cobra dates back to the times of the Indus culture.

There are many amulates and talisman types of things found in the ISC remains. They can be compared with some of the charms from *Atharva Veda* and post *Vedic* literature.

Conclusions—

Although the subject of the religion of the Indus culture is dealt in brief in the above paragraphs, the following conclusions are obvious.

(1) The Indus civilization can aptly be called as the Indus Sarasvatī Civilization (ISC) and its association with the Vedic culture which too flourished on the banks of mighty river Sarasvatī

(but desiccated in the course of several hundred years) is inevitable.

(2) All the three aspects of the *Sanātana Dharma* namely the spiritual, day to day i.e., *Ācāra-Dharma* and mundane aspects belonging to the little tradition of *Atharva Veda* are reflected in the ISC.

(3) Many a traditions, the philosophical precepts, customs and beliefs of the present day can be traced back to the ISC period. Since they form the part of the age old *SD,* the ISC religion constitutes an integral part of *SD*.

(4) According to researches of some well-known scholars of the ISC, namely I. Mahādevan, S. R. Rao and even the present author the ISC seals can be understood in light of the Vedic literature.

When the Indus script will be satisfactorily and unequivocally deciphered, it will certainly help us to understand the Indus culture in right perspective.

"Most certainly the *Ātmā* (God or *Brahma)* is above and below, in front and behind, North and South, East and West and is all in all. Who sees thus, realizes thus and meditates thus, and who has his love, recreation, friendship, felicity and happiness in *Ātmā,* he alone achieves the goal of absoluteness."

One should see and feel God in every phase and in all the circumstances of life, i.e., sitting, standing, speaking, eating, drinking, waking, sleeping, giving, taking, in every work and at every place."

—*Swami Rama Titha*

That Supreme Deity, the creator of the universe, always dwells in the hearts of creatures. Those who feel the holy presence of this great being in their hearts with their purified minds become immortal.

—*Śruti*

This *Ātmā (Brahma)* was never born and will never die, it neither grows nor undergoes decay, because it is the witness of the different states of those objects which come into existence and die away. It is omnipresent and eternally abiding pure consciousness yet like *Prāṇa* (life-breath) it appears as many under the influence of the senses.

—*Bhāgavata* (XI.3.38)

Code of Conduct in Sanātana Dharma

—*R. P. Gupta*

The goal of human life according to *Sanātana Dharma* is divine perfection or man's union with God. All our laws, our codes of conduct and our forms of worship are based on this ultimate purpose.

There are two paths. One is the path of *Preya* or happiness arising from appeasement of the senses which engulfs the Self of man in ignorance or spiritual blindness. The man so living is no better than animal. *Preya* is, therefore, considered below ethics. The other path, is that of *Śreya* or the good life which is not an end in itself. It should lead to the realization of the *Ātmā,* the true Self. A man is free to choose any of the two paths.

Now there are two stages in man's spiritual evolution. The first is that of *Abhyudaya,* man's welfare in the social context. He produces wealth and enjoys life in association with his fellow men. This is the highest aspiration of the common man. This is also the highest reach of Western thought. But this is insufficient according to *Sanātana Dharma.* A good life should also become a true life. For this man's inner life has to be searched where we shall find his divine nature and manifestation of his immortal Self. After experiencing the pleasures and power available in his sense-bound existence he rises above worldly desires and experiences Brahmahood here in this very life. This is the state of *Niḥśreyasa,* freedom of the soul or immortality. *Sanātana Dharma* comprehends both the stages of the path of *Abhyudaya* and *Niḥśreyasa.*

We have already seen that the goal of human life is communion with God and therefore all our activities should be directed to this end. It may be relevant in this connection to recall that *Sanātana Dharma* recognizes four basic desires in human beings—*Dharma* or righteousness, *Artha* or wealth, *Kāma* or sense pleasures and

Mokṣa or liberation. Righteousness is the basis of individual progress and social welfare. Wealth is necessary for man of the world without which he cannot keep his body and soul together. According to an injunction of Hinduism first comes the body and next the practice of religion. *Kāma* covers a vast area from enjoyment of conjugal love to the appreciation of art, music and poetry. But sense pleasures if not pursued in accordance of *Dharma*,degenerate into sensuality which hinders man's spiritual progress. After fulfilling all his worldly desires a man is still restless and wants to attain everlasting peace. So at last he gives up attachment to the world and seeks freedom of the Soul.

Now we should see what ethical qualities are necessary for a person on his life's journey. The aim being perfection, anything which hinders his progress, should be discarded. The cardinal virtues as laid down in Hindu scriptures and as exemplified in the lives of great saints may be grouped as under.

1. Purity—

There are two sorts of purity—external and internal. Purification of the body with water and other materials is the external purity. But this is not enough without internal purity which is achieved with purification of the mind by truth and other virtues. Both are necessary. Purity includes cleanliness, straightforwardness, freedom from pride, attachment and hatred etc. Elaborate rules are laid down in scriptures in regard to matters concerning internal and external purity. In Ślokas 8, 9 and 10, Ch. XVII. of the *Bhagavadgītā* are given the following injunctions regarding our food:

> The *Sāttvika* like the agreeable foods
> which are nourishing, juicy and pleasant
> Conducive to health, energy and joy
> Oleoginous which promote their appetite too.
>
> Such foods are liked by *Rājasika* men
> Which are saline, sour and bitter
> Too hot, pungent and dry
> Which cause grief, sickness and pain.

And those which are stinking and stale
Tasteless, putrid and impure
And which are the leavings of others
Such are the foods which the *Tāmasika* partakes.

2. Self-control—

Self-control implies both—control of the senses and the mind. It comprises a number of subsidiary virtues such as patience, forbearance, modesty and self-sacrifice. A charge is often labelled against Hinduism that it glorifies asceticism and wants its followers to suppress the flesh altogether. But this criticism is based on misunderstanding. Hinduism seeks to regulate human appetites and cravings and to control them gradually. With this end in view it prescribes a graded discipline for the different stages in which human life is divided viz., a student, a householder, a recluse and a *Saṁnyāsī.*

The first stage is for study during which a student acquires learning and knowledge, both secular and religious. He leads an austere life of complete celibacy, thus conserving his physical and mental energies. He keeps himself away from evil thoughts, evil speech and evil deeds. With marriage begins the second stage which lasts till the age of about fifty. During this period he attends to his legitimate biological and emotional urges but not by deviating from the path of righteousness. A householder apart from supporting his family has five other duties viz., studying and teaching of holy books, worship of God and observance of rites and rituals prescribed for him, rearing domestic animals and hospitality to guests and the destitute. When wrinkles appear on the skin, hairs turn grey or a grand child is born it is a signal that he is entering the third stage, of the recluse when he should retire from household responsibilities and should live in a quiet place with the minimum of needs. He devotes his time in the study of holy books and teaching, undertakes pilgrimage and meditates on God. With the beginning of the fourth and the last stage a man leaves his home and renounces all worldly attachments. He passes his time in meditation.

It will thus be seen that every stage in a man's life has its duties and obligations the discharge of which requires self-control. It is only by slow degrees that the mind has to be purged of sensual desires. The goal of complete asceticism has to be realised only in the final stage.

3. Detachment—

Detachment is freedom from attachment for worldly desires, for possessions, for wealth, for wife and children and everything which he calls his own. It is these desires which create trouble in mind. These have to be given up for purification of the mind. But this is not easy. He should understand that these objects of his love belong to God who can take them back when He chooses to do so. Death casts its shadow on all. The ignorant weep and are upset but the wise endure it peacefully. The *Bhagavadgītā* says at several places that a man should give up all earthly ties and have attachment for God alone to enjoy eternal bliss. A man should work in the spirit of a postman who distributes letters full of happy as well as unhappy news to the addressees but himself he remains unaffected by them.

4. Truth—

Truth does not mean mere truthfulness but it also implies what is right in conduct, what is just in social relations and what is true in knowledge. Hinduism believes in finding out facts by valid proofs such as direct perception, correct inference and reliable testimony. It demands that facts have not to be distorted or concealed. Half truths and evasions are considered as lies. As the purpose of truth is related to the welfare of others, a religious injunction says 'speak the truth, speak the pleasant but not the unpleasant truth'. Truth as a virtue includes honesty, sincerity, justice, faithfulness etc.

5. Ahiṁsā (Non-violence)—

Non-violence is the most remarkable contribution of Hinduism to the world. It has two sides. On the negative side it demands not to give pain to any creature in any way. On the positive side it enjoins on its followers to have perfect love for all creatures. Love is not limited to human beings, it extends to all lower creatures.

But *Ahiṁsā* is for the brave and the strong. It is not for the coward who wants to flee and escape from his responsibility. In a society beset with crime and injustice it is not always possible to strictly adhere to the creed of non-violence. The use of physical strength is fully justified against a brute in defence of our own self and of those whom we are duty-bound to defend. The use of knife by a surgeon to save the life of his patient is also not violence nor the killing by a soldier on the battle field. *Ahiṁsā* includes other virtues such as gentleness, courtesy, love and hospitality which fall under social virtues.

Man's guide in regard to his conduct in day to day life are the *Vedas, Smṛtis* and the example of great saints—living and dead who understood the spirit of the holy scriptures. And lastly it is also the satisfaction of one's inner self or conscience which has to be respected.

Just as all virtues are grouped under the five heads of purity, self-control, detachment, truth and non-violence all sins are grouped under the three heads of *Kāma, Krodha* and *Lobha* or lust, anger and greed. Sins are also classified as (1) sins of thought, (2) sins of speech and (3) sins of deed. This shows what heights of elegance had Hinduism reached. It wants its followers not to commit a sin even in thought not to speak of in action. The *Vedas* declare that a sinner who is a slave to his self-centred desire not only breaks the laws of the society but also of the Kingdom of God.

But there are persons in this scientific age who do not believe in the divine governance of the universe. Every day we find, they say, that the evil-doers are happy and prosperous while the righteous suffer all sorts of miseries and pains. Had there been a just ruler or God such an anamoly would not have happened. The world is definitely governed by blind will. This misconception is due to ignorance as we shall see. Nor is it true that whatever happens to human beings is predetermined by God as stated in the doctrine of predestination. According to it some are preordained to everlasting happiness and some to everlasting misery. This throws all blame on God for man's vices and sufferings and makes him an unjust God.

The Law of *Karma* which is an important contribution of Hinduism removes all these misconceptions and shows the right path. In the words of Swāmī Vivekānanda:

"Each one of us is the maker of his own fate. This law knocks on the head at once all doctrines of predestination and fate, and gives us the only means of reconciliation between God and man. We, we and none else, are responsible for what we suffer. We are the effects and we are the causes. We are free, therefore. If I am unhappy, it has been my own making and that very thing shows that I can be happy if I will. The human will stands beyond all circumstance. Before it—the strong gigantic, infinite will and freedom in man—all the powers even of nature, must bow down, succumb and become its servants. This is the result of the law of *Karma*."

A man has the freedom of choosing his course of action. He is, therefore, accountable for his deeds. It is universal law of cause and effect in relation to human life. It is said in the *Mahābhārata*—"As a calf recognizes and approaches its mother in the midst of a thousand cows, even so the effects of past deeds do not fail to recognize and visit the doer in his new life" According to this law every individual is responsible for his prosperity and adversity, for his joy and suffering. It does not counter God's supremacy. God's sovereignty and man's freedom go together. From day to day every individual is shaping his own future by accumulating within himself the subtle impressions of his thoughts, words and deeds.

The term *Karma* in a wide sense applies to the impressions created by it. This can be arranged in the following three groups—

1. The accumulated, *Sañcita Karma,* the latent impressions of the past that will fructify in a future life or lives.

2. The fructifying, *Prārabdha Karma,* the past impressions that are bearing fruit in the present life.

3. Passing *Kriyamāṇa Karma,* the impressions of the current activities that are accumulating and will fructify in due course.

Man can make amends for his accumulated *Karma* and has control over his prospective *Karma*. But the fructifying *Karma*

which is responsible for his present human body and the inborn aptitudes is beyond his control. This can be illustrated by the example of a bowman. The bowman has no control over the arrow which he has already shot *(Prārabdha Karma)*. But the arrow which he has fixed to the bow and wants to shoot can be prevented from being shot if he chooses to do so. (passing or *kriyamāṇa Karma)*. The bowman can discard the whole quiver of arrows if he chooses to do so. This illustrates man's control over accumulated *(Sañcita Karma)*. *Prārabdha karma* is that part of a man's accumulated *Karma* which has begun to bear fruit in his present life and which cannot be avoided. *Sañcita Karma* unlike *Prārabdha Karma,* can be expiated by penance and can be totally destroyed by *Jñāna*. *Kriyamāṇa Karma* is entirely in our hand. As we sow so shall we reap.

So the law of *Karma* instead of leading a man to despair instils hope in his mind. When he knows that sins are responsible for sufferings and that what we are, is the result of what we have done, we shall be inclined to do only good.

Sādhana Dharma is twofold. To divide it on a broader basis, we may classify it under three heads—bodily, vocal and mental. The sage Vātsyāyana, in his *Nyāya-Bhāṣya* (gloss on the *Nyāya-Sūtras* of *Maharṣi* Gautama), says that bodily *Dharma* consists in practising charity, protecting the weak and the helpless and service of the needy—'शरीरेण दानं परित्राणं परिचरणं च' vocal *Dharma* consists in speaking the truth, politeness of speech, saying wholesome things and *Svādhyāya*—"वाचा सत्यं प्रिय हितं स्वाध्यायश्चेति" whereas mental *Dharma* consists in kindliness, desirelessness and faith—"मनसा दयामस्पृहां श्रद्धाञ्चेति".

Ātmā is present alike in all forms of life, big and small, from the human being down to the meanest insect nay, even in trees and plants.

Sanātana Dharma—Two Aspects—Worship and Social Conduct

—Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal'

Religions are adoptions of sure ways for realization of the ultimate truth. That truth as the *Vedas,* from the most ancient times, declare, is one without the second *'Ekameyādvitīyam'* and is explained by the wise in different ways,[1] perhaps to suit the capabilities and thinkings of seekers of different temperaments in different circumstances and under different situations. In the circumstances existing in this vast country of India, there must naturally, appear many sects. About these many sects and traditions the mysterious fact is that no sect has any quarrel with another. Each individual or each group lives according to its own beliefs and traditions but does not interfere in the social order of the society as a whole. No propagation for conversion and no interference in other's ideas is in practice in this Vedic religion of India, rightly called the *Sanātana Dharma*—the eternal order for overall well-being of the human beings. The Śaivite has no quarrel with the Vaiṣṇavite. Similarly the Vaiṣṇavite has no foreign feelings about the Śaivite or the *Śākta.* They know that all must come together at the end. Therefore each individual or each group worships its own chosen deity and goes ahead for universal release. The *Gītā* says—"All prescribed actions attain complete fulfilment only in true knowledge."[2] This is the theory of *Iṣṭa.* This *Iṣṭa* may be formless or with form.

There is one and the only one reality that has to be realised. That reality is supreme beatitude, that truth is eternal happiness, that is called God. But since the levels of consciousness in individuals or groups vary, there is need of cultivating tolerance for each

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1. एकं सत् विप्राः बहुधा वदन्ति । *(Veda)*

2. सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥ *(Gītā* IV.33)

other. Different natures require different methods. The method of coming to God for one, may not be the same for another. The idea, there must be one way for everybody, is injurious. This is meaningless and should be avoided. You have to understand that collective progress is not possible unless each individual at his own level of consciousness heads towards the attainment of purified intelligence. Universal progress is possible through variety, which is the very soul of life. If there is no variety there is no spirit of competition. There can be no creation possible. We exist with the keeping up of this variety. 'Diversity must work for unity' is the law of nature. All trees and plants grow pointing to the same sky. Similarly, everyone works for the same aim i.e., peace and joy. With the deeper thought we come to understand that every effort moves towards the same centre of unity. Had everyone been of the same religious opinion or take to the same path, all would appear dull and lifeless. We exist because of this variation in thought. Therefore we need not quarrel. Quarrelsomeness hampers progress. The message of *Sanātana Dharma* is universal brotherhood, peace and progress.

To the address of welcome from the Hindus in Jaffna, Swāmī Vivekānanda's eloquent reply was, "your way is very good for you, but not for me. My way is good for me, but not for you. My way is called in *Saṁskṛta,* my *Iṣṭa*. Mind you, we have no quarrel with any religion in the world. We have each our *Iṣṭa*. But when we see men coming and saying—"This is the only way" and trying to force it on us Indians, we have a word to say; we laugh at them. For such people who want to destroy their brothers because they seem to follow a different path towards God—for them to talk of love is absurd. Their love does not count for much. How can they preach of love who cannot bear another man to follow a different path from their own ? If that is love, what is hatred ? We have no quarrel with any religion in the world whether it teaches men to worship Christ, Buddha or Mohammed, or any other prophet."[3]

'Welcome my brothers', the Hindu says—'I am going to help

3. *The Complete Works* of Swāmī Vivekānanda Vol. III. p. 131-132.

you; but you must allow me to follow my way too. That is my *Iṣṭa*. Your way is very good, no doubt, but it may be dangerous for me. My own experience tells me what food is good for me, and no army of doctors can tell me that. So I know for my own experience what path is the best for me'.[4]

Swāmī Vivekānanda further says, "that is the goal, the *Iṣṭa* and therefore, we say that if a temple or a symbol, or an image helps you to realize the divinity within, you are welcome to it. Have two hundred images if you like. If certain forms and formularies help you to realise the divine, God speed you; have by all means whatever forms, and whatever temples and whatever ceremonies you want to bring you nearer to God. But do not quarrel about them; the moment you quarrel you are not going Godward, you are going backward towards the brutes".[5]

Above twelve centuries back Śaṅkarācārya revitalized this ancient theory of *Iṣṭa* for the easy grasp and practice of the people of India. Every religion must be based on love and no hatred for others. Sincere efforts alone bring about that success spontaneously and that only can change a hell into heaven. All kinds of reformers, preachers and politicians must have learnt this before they could be crowned with a lasting success as the transitory successes have only the transgressing means. The tenets of *Sanātana Dharma* are valuable and eternal for man on this earth.

There are two aspects of this eternal religion of man:one is the individual aspect of *Dharma* and the other is the social aspect or the fundamental morality.

Man approaches God through what is divine in himself. Swāmī Vivekānanda described religion as "the manifestation of the divinity that is already in man." Therefore it is the joy of the soul that becomes the medium of approach to the divine. Every person according to his/her own capability chooses the deity for worship. Divine assistance and grace are sought to help him out of his sorrows and imperfection. Sincere devotion in one's heart

4. *Ibid*. p. 132.
5. *Ibid*. p. 132.

is enough for worship. No details of ritual are needed then. God may be worshipped as the divine architect as is enjoined by the *Veda*—

> 'He who has eyes on all sides and mouth on all sides,
> Arms on all sides and feet on all sides;
> He, the one God, producing heaven and earth,
> Wields them together with His arms as wings'.[6]

God is worshipped as light also. The *Sāma Veda* says—"Light is God, God is light."[7] He is worshipped in all forms. "For every form He has been the model."[8] God is also worshipped as mother, as father, as *Guru* and so on. And in all cases God is the source of goodness. There is a Vedic prayer—

> 'Savitā, God ! send far away all evil;
> Send us what is good.'

(*Ṛgveda* V. 82. 5)

There is no mention of a particular religion in the *Vedas,* the primary books of exalted conduct and true knowledge. Hinduism is not a religion. A Hindu is one whose motherland is Hindustan, may he be of any caste, creed or colour. But he is the man who lives for progress and realization of the truth.

(2) To be able to follow the right path one has to subject oneself to fundamental moral and spiritual laws. In this regard the *Vedas* accept the earth and material existence to the fullest extent. It is expressed thus—

> "From perfect austerity were born
> Eternal Law and Truth (in the beginning of creation).[9]

Therefore, consecration *(Dīkṣā)* and austerity *(Tapas)* are the foundation of personal character.[10] In this course it is the

6. विश्वतश्चक्षुरुत विश्वतोमुखो विश्वतोबाहुरुत विश्वतस्पात् ।
सं बाहुभ्यां धमति सं पतत्रैर्द्यावाभूमी जनयन् देव एकः ॥

(*Ṛgveda* X.81.3, *Śvetāśvatara Up*.III.3)

7. अग्निर्ज्योतिर्ज्योतिरग्निः । (*Sāma Veda* 1831)

8. रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव । (*Ṛg*. VI. 47. 18)

9. ऋतं च सत्यं चाभीद्धात् तपसोऽध्यजायत । (*Ṛg*. X. 190. 1)

10. व्रतेन दीक्षामाप्नोति । (*Yajurveda* 19. 30)

sacrifice, *Yajña* or ritual and scriptural knowledge which make religion in relation to divinity. This social conduct develops by strictly following the fundamental principles of moral life which the earth upholds.

"Truth, great law that is stern, consecration, austerity, prayer and sacrifice (ritual), these uphold the earth. May that earth, the mistress of our past and future, make a wide world for us."[11]

Religion is therefore realization of truth. Social conduct and worship are the necessary aspects of the realization that God is truth. This is *Sanātana Dharma,* the acclaimed universal symbol of which is *Aum* (ॐ). The *Veda* also instructs that 'God has truth as the law of His being," and Guru Nānaka sums up the saying that 'there is one *Aum* (Divine Being) whose name is Truth.'

When the youth has been invested with the thread of his caste, let him diligently prosecute the study of the *Vedas,* in the house of his preceptor, with an attentive spirit, and leading a life of continence. He is to wait upon his *Guru,* assiduously observant of purificatory practices, and the *Veda* is to be acquired by him, whilst he is regular in the performance of religious rites. In the morning *Sandhyā* he is first to salute the sun; in the evening; fire and then to address his preceptor with respect. He must stand when his master is standing; move when he is walking; and sit beneath him when he is seated: he must never sit, nor walk, nor stand when his teacher does the reverse. When desired by him, let him read the *Veda* attentively, placed before his preceptor; and let him eat the food he has collected as alms, when permitted by his teacher. Let him bathe in water which has first been used for his preceptor's ablutions; and every morning bring fuel and water, and whatsoever else may be required.

—*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

11. सत्यं बृहदृतमुग्रं दीक्षा तपो ब्रह्म यज्ञः पृथिवीं धारयन्ति।
सा नो भूतस्य भव्यस्य पत्न्युरुं लोकं पृथिवी नः वृणोतु॥
(*Athrva Veda* XII. 1.1)

The Legacy of Sanātana Dharma

—*Om Prakash Dubey*

English words such as religion, creed, faith, doctrine or cult etc., used in common parlance, cannot be termed synonyms of *Dharma*. The Hindu view of *Dharma* is directly related to right action, right behavior, right conduct of a man. *Dharma* is not any specific set of institutions. It permits of essential changes in our social life. It is simply the application of the spirit of religion to the conditions of life and must necessarily change as life changes. *Dharma* is derived from the *Saṁskṛta* root *(Dhṛ)* meaning to hold. In this vast universe everything, from the smallest particle to the biggest conceiveable object, has its *Dharma* according to which it performs its functions rightly. *Dharma* is that substantial element of a thing which sustains its existence. For example, the heat which sustains the fire is called its *Dharma*. If there is no heat, it will not be called fire but ashes. Similarly manhood, womanhood and studentship etc., which are all abstract characters and sustain the existence of men, women and students are called *Dharma*. The things exist only due to these main elements. This very logic confirms that *Dharma* or religion of human beings is humanity. *Dharma* brings well-being to human beings. *Dharma* leads to eternal happiness and immortality. *Dharma* is verily the Truth. *Dharma* includes all external deeds as well as thoughts and other mental practices. *Dharma* is the principle of holiness. *Dharma* leads to the path of perfection and glory. *Dharma* makes a human being divine.

In fact, social flexibility is one of the chief characteristics of *Sanātana Dharma*. It is well-known that, in the course of our long history, our society has undergone many changes without ceasing to be Hindu. It is said that in *Kṛta Yuga, Tretā Yuga, Dwāpara Yuga* and *Kali Yuga* (division of time) the ordinances of Manu, Gautama, Śaṅkhalikhita and Parāśara respectively are of the highest authority. Thus *Dharma* changes from age to age.

Another characteristic of *Sanātana Dharma* is its indifference to history. Hindu seers care more for the truth of experience or soundness of doctrine than for the circumstance that gave it birth. Sir Charles Eliot's saying is very much true for ancient *Sanātana Dharma*—"The truly religious mind does not care for the history of religion, just as, among us, the scientific mind does not dwell on the history of science."

Sanātana Dharma is not a narrow creed, cult or ism, but a system comprising infinite variety of thoughts which are eternal and universal in application. It is more a way of life than a form of thought. It is an unending quest of ultimate reality and truth. It does not take anything for granted as preconceived notion or belief, but on the other hand, has always kept its door open to new ideas and thoughts. Due to this inherent correct approach, it has grown from rich to richer by inhaling fresh air and ideas from all directions. It is thus a movement and not a position, a process and not a result or a fixed revelation. It has shown tolerance, believed that all paths lead to the same ultimate goal. Hindu scriptures say—"Truth is one; wisemen express it in many ways "*Sanātana Dharma* thus allows in a real sense full freedom of thought and expression. That is why there are so many schools of thought propounded by great sages and *Ṛṣis—Sāṅkhya, Vaiśeṣika, Karmayoga, Bhaktiyoga, Advaita, Dvaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita* and several others. There are worshippers of Śiva, Viṣṇu, Śakti, Gaṇeśa, Hanumān and several other gods and goddesses in various forms and shapes. But all firmly believe that same *Brahma* (God) is manifested in all of them.

The *Gītā* says—"Oh Arjuna, in whatever form or shape one worships me, I reciprocate to him in the same way."

Thus *Sanātana Dharma* is as wide as ocean and provides the world with the highest philosophy and most liberal thoughts a parallel of which is difficult to find anywhere else. It is not confined to anyone book, prophet or messiah whose preachings and teachings may be taken as the last word. It is important to know that *Sanātana Dharma* has no founder.

For *Sanātana Dharma,* in spite of the freedom it allows in religious speculation, is severely practical religion. Its *Sādhanā* is designed for the purpose of actually taking the man who chooses a particular path to his goal and making him see and realize God under some form or other at first and then ultimately attain to the formless.

A Hindu, while concluding his daily prayers to the Almighty does not ask for his daily bread or pleasure of heaven but says—"Let all be happy, let all be free from disease, let all see good and let there not be any victim of suffering or pain."

Śrī Aurobindo said—"Today's *Hindu Dharma* is the *Sanātana* (eternal) *Dharma,* the eternal religion, which has been perfected by countless *Ṛṣis (seers)* and *Avatāras* (incarnations of God) to uplift humanity. It is for the world and not for themselves that Indians are rising. That which we call *Hindu Dharma* is really the eternal religion. It is for the *Dharma* and by the *Dharma* that India exists. It is one religion which knows what immortality is and has utterly removed from us the reality of death. When the *Sanātana Dharma* declines, then the Indian nation declines and if the *Sanātana Dharma* were capable of perishing, with the *Sanātana Dharma* the Indian nation would perish."

The word Hindu is derived from the *Saṁskṛta* root *Hiḍi* * which means to achieve one's objective, acquire knowledge, to be progressive and ignore the things which are obstructions. Therefore, a person who proceeds on the spiritual path to attain perfection by acquiring knowledge is called a Hindu. The characteristics of a Hindu are—

H—Humanity.
I—Integrity.
N—Nobility.
D—Divinity.
U—Universality.

and a Hindu must possess all these qualities.

Sanātana Dharma is *Mānava Dharma,* which means humanity

* In the *Dhātupātha* of Pāṇini, we get the root 'हिडि गत्यनादरयोः' from this root we can anyhow derive the word 'हिण्डु' but not 'हिन्दु'.

—*Editor*

and comprises a number of qualities and principles. It has five main recognised qualities, each of which begins with the letter P. They are—

1. *Parameśvara* (God).
2. *Prārthanā* (prayer).
3. *Punarjanma* (rebirth).
4. *Puruṣārtha* (ends to be attained).
5. *Prāṇidayā* (compassion for all living beings and non-violence).

The great seer Manu has mentioned ten main principles of *Sanātana Dharma* in his *Manusmṛti*—"*Dhṛti* (patience), *Kṣamā* (forgiveness), *Dama* (self-control and contentment), *Asteya* (not to steal or conseal). *Śauca* (cleanliness, purity), *Indriya Nigraha* (control over senses), *Dhī* (Intellect, wisdom), *Vidyā* (right knowledge of the scriptures), *Satyam* (truth), *Akrodha* (absence of anger and avoiding tension).

A Hindu recognises *Dharma* as the root and the basis of his prosperity. Earning money just for the sake of money turns a man into a demoniac personality. He becomes a constant prey to anger, hatred, greed, passion, pride and power. But when material objects are acquired on the basis of *Dharma,* they are used as means to furthering happiness and amiability in family and observing ethical laws for promoting harmony and peace in society. According to *Sanātana Dharma* the final goal before every Hindu is the attainment of *Mokṣa* or liberation from the cycles of birth and death.

Verily he is the seer who sees the Lord installed in the heart of every living being as the only imperishable substance among all perishable things.

God, the illuminator of all lights, shining beyond the darkness (of ignorance), having knowledge as His essence, the only knowable substance, that which is grasped through knowledge and who is kindly disposed towards all, is installed in every heart.

What Is Sanātana Dharma

—Sadhvi Sri Kamlesh Kumari

Truth is one. God is one. Humanity is one. Religion is one. And that is what *Sanātana Dharma* teaches us. *Sanātana Dharma* is not merely Hinduism—it implies something much more. *Sanātana Dharma* is the 'Eternal Religion' that was, is and will be, forever. It exists with God and in God and will never cease to be, as long as God is, which is, forever. All other so called 'Religions' are actually creeds or cults—they are like leaves in the 'Eternal Tree', with its 'Eternal Roots' firmly embedded in the Eternal Soil. Leaves may wither and fall off, and fresh leaves spring up again, but the tree and its roots will exist for all time.

A man who has attained ethical perfection by the continued practice of right conduct or *Yama* and *Niyama* acquires a magnetic personality. He can influence millions. People respect a man who has good character. *Sāttvika* virtues make a man divine. A man may be skilful artist, a clever songster, an able poet or a great scientist; but if he has no real character, he has nothing which we can really call valuable. Character is a mighty soul-force. It is like a sweet flower that wafts fragrance far and wide.

Righteousness is eternal. Do not leave the path of righteousness even if your life is in danger. Do not leave righteousness for the sake of some material gain. A virtuous life and a clean conscience give a great deal of comfort to a man while he is living and at the time of death also. A holy man with piety is far superior to the mighty potentate. God is much pleased with a pious man.

Dear friends ! Do your duties in a satisfactory manner in accordance with *Sadācāra*. Consult the *Śāstras* and *Mahātmās* whenever you are in doubt. Build up your character. This will give you success in life. Struggle hard daily to conquer old evil habits. Cultivate virtuous healthy habits. Character will help you to attain the goal of life. Character is your very being. Stick to *Sadācāra* with leech-like tenacity. Practise it and realize the *Sat-Cit-Ānanda* state. May character confer on you the *Ātmika* bliss and Self-realization ! May the blessings of the Lord be upon you all ! May joy, immortality, peace and poise abide with you for ever.

—Swami Sivananda Sarasvati

The Concept of Universal Religion

—*Dr. G. R. Vijayakumar*

"I practise neither the Hindu way of fasting nor the Muslim way observed during the month of *Ramzāna*. I serve only Him who saves me in the end. The one Lord of the earth is also my Allāha. I have made my peace with both Hindus and Muslims. I do not go to Mecca for a pilgrimage nor do I worship at the Hindu holy places. I shall serve Him and no other, I do not worship idols or recite *Nimāza*. I cherish in my heart the formless one. We are neither Hindus nor Muslims. Our bodies and souls are the gift from Allāha, Rāma, Kabīra makes the assertion that he had realized the Lord through meeting the *Guru* who was also the *Pīra*."

—Guru Arjuna in *Rāga Bhairon*

The expression 'Universal Religion' brings forth a variety of images, namely, that of a bouquet in which various kinds of flowers have been studded or a delicacy in which edible matters of differnt varieties have been put together or a necklace in which the pearls have been collected from different sources. In other words, by 'Universal Religion' is meant a synthesis of the best elements of the different religious systems like Christianity, Buddhism, Islāma and Hinduism. But this is an erroneous notion. Universal Religion is neither the product of ratiocination or discursive understanding nor an amalgum of the vital elements of different religions produced eclectically. For one thing, the universal kept apart from the particulars, is a meaningless abstraction. Universals find their meaning and significance in and through the particulars.

Attempts to arrive at a systematic conception of 'Universal Religion' through discursive understanding failed in the past and are bound to fail in the future also. Akabara's attempt to establish a 'Universal Religion' acceptable to everybody (Dīn-i-Ilāhī) did not succeed as it was based on unsound reasoning. Akabara

studied with remarkable devotion and sincerity the scriptures of the Hindus, of the Christians, of the Jains and others but failed to notice the basic unity underlying all religious systems. In his over-zealousness, he betrayed an unfair preference of one religious faith to another and earned condemnation from all persons. Akabara invited Christian missionaries from Goa, studied the scriptural texts under their guidance, said his prayers in the chapel and even encouraged the missionaries to convert Hindus and Muslims to Christianity. It is said that Hinduism exercised a deeper influence on the mind of Akabara than any other religion and he adopted the Hindu way of life and took active part in many great Hindu festivals. Akabara used to say that even when engaged in ordinary duties of the world one should have constant thought of God. History shows that the 'Universal Religion' propounded by Akabara did not survive and the followers of this path, whose number was not large, failed to ascertain, after Akabara's death, how exactly the 'Universal Religion' could be made dynamic and fruitful in everybody's life.

Hegel and his followers endeavoured to establish a 'Universal Religion' on the basis of certain fundamentals whcih follow from the fact of man's consciousness of his own finitude or limitation. This is the self-enquiry propounded by Ramaṇa Maharṣi of Tiruvannamalai to enquire always "Who am I ?" In order to be fully conscious of his own limitation a man must transcend his finitude and this inevitably leads one to the awareness of the Absolute which is the ground of all that is. In other words, to be conscious of change as change one must be changeless. When, for instance, I go to a film show and see the movie pictures in quick succession, I as a cogniser do not change, for, had the 'I' also changed corresponding to the change in the pictures, my awareness of change would not have been possible. If we knew finite things only it would have been impossible for us to characterise them as finite. The knowledge of a limit involves the transcendence of it. Now, this awareness of a limit and its transcendence are present in every human being.

Therefore religious consciousness is universal. The Hegelian concept lays too much emphasis on man's intellect alone to the utter neglect of his feeling and will. Religion is man's total reaction to reality and if it fails to satisfy man's thought, emotion and volition in the appropriate manner, it degenerates into meaningless practices and rituals. Hegelian philosophy did not inspire the religious aspirant, for the absolute of Hegel is like a dark night in which all cows are black. Had Hegel been fully conscious of the lessons of his own logic he could have certainly grasped that the plan of the universe is identity in difference or unity in diversity and 'Universal Religion' cannot therefore be a substitute for dead uniformity in which all individual differences are obliterated.

It is held that the greatest obstacle that prevents us from realizing the ideals of 'Universal Religion' is the radical difference that exists between two religions in regard to their philosophy, mythology and rituals. These differences are sometimes overdrawn. It is true that a particular religion is rooted in certain traditions, in a philosophy, in mythologies and expressed through certain rituals. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to discover broad principles which are common to all the different religions of the world. It may be said that in spite of differences in the philosophies that underlie the major religions of the world viz., Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, Islāma and others, all agree in one broad principle of an Almighty—a contingent which cannot be explained. In other words, the relative or the contingent is not self-explanatory. That is the main philosophical theme of all major religions.

Some scholars point out that there cannot be any point of agreement between Hinduism and Buddhism, for while the former is polytheistic the latter is non-theistic. * Polytheism is not the appropriate term to characterise Hinduism, for the Hindu does not really worship many gods but simply envisages God in many forms. As we have in the *Ṛg Veda*—"There is one but they call

* Henotheism is the appropriate term as it indicates worship of one God in many forms of which only one is worshipped at a time.

Him by many names." Buddhism is not materialism nor an offshoot of modern psychology which discovers no soul, no 'ghost in the machine' beyond individual psychoses. Something that can say 'I' does remain and that is the state of enlightenment. The precise nature of this enlightenment was not discussed by Buddha. He refrained from describing the indescribable. The Buddhist doctrines of *Nibbāna* and *Anāttā* are correlated concepts. *Nibbāna* means "blowing out the personal desire". *Anāttā* means a life of good conduct and intuitive insight. Buddha looked upon religion as a way of life and he was convinced that religion has its roots in the deepest inward life of man. Just before his death, he told his disciple Ānanda—"Be lamps unto yourselves. Be a refuge to yourselves. Seek no outer refuge. Hold fast to the truth as a lamp and refuge. "One can notice clearly how the Vedantic *Aparokṣānubhūti* compares with the view of truth as a lamp and a refuge.

Christ's sayings—"I and my father are one," "Love thy neighbour as thyself," might have developed an Advaitic view point if the rationale could be discovered.

The same conclusion might be deduced if we know how to separate the husk from the kernel so far as Islam is concerned. Consider for instance, the following verse of the *Koran (Sūra* 25: 63)—"And the servants of the beneficent God are they who walk on the earth in humbleness and when the ignorant address them, they say 'Peace'."

I do not for a moment suggest that a mere discovery of certain points of agreement or similarity of attitude between one religion and another would lead us to 'Universal Religion'. All that I wish to submit is that tolerance must necessarily lead to acceptance and for this the followers of different religious paths must develop a mutual understanding which results in what may be called a confluence of selves.

From the life of Sāīn Bābā of Shirdi we know that a standard 'Universal Religion' is an impossibility since unity in diversity is the plan of the Universe. Sāīn Bābā never wanted a Hindu to be converted into Christianity or a Muslim to Hindu. One must stick

to one's own religion and yet feel the underlying bond of unity among all religions. The bond of unity is spiritual, it is timeless, deathless. It is pure consciousness, Sāīn Bābā rightly asserted.

Consciousness is in fact distinctionless. The serial unity is an unchanging conscious principle at the background in which there is no plurality. That consciousness is an unchanging witness, is proved by the fact of dreamless sleep. The dream-experience and waking experience are fundamentally different. We fail to ascertain the beginning or end of both waking and dream states, for both seem to be uncaused. When we compare waking state with dream the soul assumes the position of a witness of the two and no change can be allowed in the witness. The two are independent of each other and both have claim to a reality of their own. The interval between the two is metaphysical. It is pure consciousness which shines in dreamless sleep and witnesses both the dream experience and waking experience. Thus consciousness cannot be subject to change because it is a witness of change.

It may be argued that such spiritual illumination is given to a few saints like Ramaṇa, Sāīn Bābā and others only. What happens to the common man who wishes to know the bond of unity on a plane other than the metaphysical ? It may be stated in reply that in our daily life we get a glimpse of the timeless, as for example when we listen to a song in rapt attention or witness a landscape and appraise its aesthetic value. It is not the individual ego which evaluates the beauty of a landscape or transmits itself in a melodious musical performance, but the deeper spirit which transcends the mind-body complex and yet permeates it. What is true of the individual is also true of the Universal. Enlightenment comes when one realizes one's identity with the Universal Self who is both above and below.

Rituals of different religions which appear to be mutually antagonistic, may help us in the matter if we proceed with sympathy and devotion. Religious signs or symbols are voluntarily chosen and they imply a spiritual meaning and significance. Consider the different physical postures such as bowing, kneeling, folding the palms, touching the ears, saluting

etc., or take such rites as burning incense or light, sacrifice, oblation, ablation, ablution etc., We accept temples, mosques, churches, certain rivers, crosses as sacred, not because what they are in themselves but because they are symbols possessing spiritual meaning. The goal of 'Universal Religion' can be reached only by realizing that the different religions are expressions of one basic truth, viz., the spirit's self-discovery by gradual withdrawal from the one—self. It is possible for each one of us to realize this end.

This precisely is the goal of 'Universal Religion.' It does not aim at destroying one's religion so as to achieve a common standard. It aims at giving man a lift from where he is.

'Universal Religion' is not a motley of diverse faiths. It is the recognition of the basic truth of all religious systems of the world. Heisenberg says—"There is a higher power, not influenced by our wishes, which finally decides and judges. People have used different words at different times for this central power. They called it spirit or God. There are many ways to this centre and one can choose anyone suitable to him."

To sum up: the idea of 'Universal Religion' is not an unattainable ideal. We shall however fail to achieve the end if we concentrate on ratiocination only. Let emotional responsiveness and a strong determination be our guide; I am sure the goal is not a far-off divine event.

Meditation is a powerful tonic. It is a mental and nervine tonic as well. The holy vibrations penetrate all the cells of the body and cure its diseases. Those who meditate save doctor's bills. The powerful soothing waves that arise during meditation exercise a benign influence on the mind, nerves, organs and cells of the body. The divine energy freely flows from the feet of the Lord to the different systems of the *Sādhaka* (aspirant). Meditation itself is a panacea for all diseases. (If you are seriously ailing you can do *Japa* and light meditation while lying on the bed.

—*Swami Sivananda*

Sanātana Dharma and World Religions

—*Prof. Satya Swarup Misra*

Dharma is normally translated as religion. But when we go to the depth of the meaning they are not exactly synonymous. *Dharma* is derived from the root 'Dhṛ' to hold, uphold, become the substratum. *Dharma* upholds the person, the society, the country, the nation and the whole world or the whole universe. Hinduism is another word, which may be explained in this context. The word Hindu is a Persian name of the river Sindhu. 'S' became 'H' in Iranian. Subsequently the area near the Sindhu was called Hindu* by the foreigners through the Iranian. The language Hindi and the country's name India is related with the word Hindu and with the *Dharma* of India which is called simply *Dharma* in our ancient scriptures. The word religion is borrowed into English from Latin and is related to the root 'eligare' to bind that is originally it means a group bound with one faith. In our ancient scripture we often find *Sanātana* as an adjective of *Dharma*. The word *Sanātana* nowadays means 'eternal'. But in Vedic language it means 'ancient'. The word *Sanā* means old and is related with the words Sanat Kumāra etc., who were the most ancient sages. These four more ancient sages Sanat Kumāra etc., are referred to in *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā* as '*pūrve catvāraḥ*' meaning the most ancient four sages. The English word *Senior* is borrowed from Latin which is a comparative degree of Latin *senex* 'old'. The adjective senile and noun senility are forms from the same. The Greek word 'henos' 'old' Gothic 'sinista' 'eldest', Old Irish 'sen' 'old' are also related with the same root. Thus *Sanātana* means pertaining to the ancient time. And *Sanātana Dharma* thereby means the oldest *Dharma*. The word religion is narrower than the *Dharma*, indicating a group with the common faith, for which in *Saṁskṛta* we have the words *Sampradāya*. The suffix-ism is also used with

* Sindhu—Hindu—Indus (The word India is relative to Indus and not Hindu).

various religions like Buddhism, Jainism, Judaism, Zorostrianism. This suffix 'ism' is also used with other groups having a common social belief like communism, socialism and this is also used with words like communalism and even loosely though, goondaism etc. Therefore, the word 'ism' is much different from the word *Dharma*. But since the word religion is used in the translation of *Dharma,* I may also use the word 'religion' in the sense of *Dharma* in this article.

Dharma is one for the whole mankind. It upholds the human being. Religions are many. They are originally used to indicate a sect or group with a common religious faith. The earliest recorded phase of *Sanātana Dharma* is sometimes termed as the Vedic religion, which is the most ancient religion of the world. The *Ṛgveda* is the most ancient religious scripture of the world. Because the date of *Ṛgveda* goes beyond five thousand B.C., on the basis of the recent linguistic evidence, which shows that *Ṛgvedic* words are borrowed in Uralic in 5000 B.C. (vide S. S. Misra: *The Aryan Problem—A Linguistic Approach,* page 94—96). No other religion has such old religious record. Western scholars formerly accepted fifteen hundred B.C. as the date of the *Ṛgveda,* on the basis of Maxmuller's proposed date, based on rough guess. But further linguistic and archaelogical evidences trace to a much earlier date like five thousand B.C. as the lowest limit. Therefore, *Dharma* or *Sanātana Dharma* (or the so-called Hindu Religion) is undoubtedly the most ancient religious contribution of India to the world. *Manu Smṛti* says—*etaddeśa prasūtasya sakāśādagrajanmanaḥ svaṁ svaṁ caritraṁ śikṣeran-pṛthivyāṁ sarvamānavāḥ* (II. 20).

"All people on the earth, may learn their mode of conduct from the *Brāhmaṇas* born in this country." This practically signifies that the ancient religion of this country was destined to be the source of the other religions of the world.

Now a question may arise if all religions come from one source, why there is difference from religion to religion. Sometimes they seem antagonistic to each other. Sometimes one religious group thinks another religion to be rather irreligious and harmful to human beings. Some religions consider it to be their duty to destroy

other religions. Thus the difference of the approach has sometimes differed so much. But in fact religions do not have any essential difference. All believe in the Almighty. All religions believe in the Supreme excellence of the Truth. Now one may challenge if Truth is one and the same, why do we see the difference in the religions of the world ? The answer is, the difference is there because of the difference of approach for preaching the Truth. Why did the great teachers teach the truth in different manners ? Because truth is perceived by the Master through the Soul *(Ātmā)* not through the mind *(Manaḥ)*. When one goes beyond the mind, one perceives the truth. But to explain the truth or preach the truth, one has to come down to the level of mind. And mind interprets the truth in accordance with the place and time limitation. In other words the Masters reveal the truth to the people around them in a way they can understand and accept. Therefore, practically the religions of the world differ in degree of manifestation of the truth, although they are essentially one and the same.

As I have given above on linguistic evidence, the lowest limit of *Ṛgveda* in 5000 B.C. That means it goes beyond and it may be much beyond that. Traditionally the *Vedas* are considered to be *Anādi* that is without beginning. In other words the *Vedas* are considered contemporary to Almighty. The *Vedas* are described as the breath of the Almighty *(yasya niśvasitā vedāḥ)*. Therefore, *Sanātana Dharma,* which has Vedic religion in its earliest phase, is very old also from linguistic point of view. It is in a way *Mānava Dharma* or human religion. It provides instructions for a human being , who may be any human being of any part of the world, to live an exceptionally good social life. A good social life includes excellent social behaviour towards parents, brothers and sisters, servents and masters, old men, young men, children, neighbours, people of other religions, people of other countries besides domestic animals and animals around him and animals in the forest. *Sanātana Dharma* classifies the duties of persons of the different classes in the Society interconnected with each other viz., the duty of a priest *(Brāhmaṇa),* warrior *(Kṣatriya),* trader *(Vaiśya)* and other workers *(Śūdra)* etc. Thus the ancient sages,

who made a thorough research on *Sanātana Dharma*, have left out nothing, not even a minor tit bit beyond their scrutiny of various phases of human life. In spite of that the research continues even now and people in different ages including modern times have contributed a lot to the subtle understanding of the *Sanātana Dharma*.

Western scholars have critically studied the Vedic religion and have shown the various stages of development. Some of them have shown that the Vedic religion as found in the *Saṁhitā* was polytheistic and became monotheistic later on as found in the *Upaniṣads*. Max Muller has however, shown that it was not polytheism in *Saṁhitā* but it was henotheism. According to him although several gods are independently praised, each one is praised as the Almighty. Max Muller is perfectly correct. *Ṛgveda* also says—'*indraṁ mitraṁ varuṇaṁ agnimāhurekaṁ sad viprā bahudhā vadanti*'. 'Though He is one, the sages describe him severally as Agni, Mitra, Varuṇa etc.' This is the central point of the *Sanātana Dharma* that the Almighty is one and only one and almost all religions of the world agree with this.

Vedic literature comprises the *Saṁhitās*, the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Āraṇyakas* and the *Upaniṣads*. The *Saṁhitās* are four—the *Ṛgveda Saṁhita*, the *Yajurveda Saṁhitā*, the *Atharvaveda Saṁhitā* and the *Sāmaveda Saṁhitā*. *Ṛgveda* describes the Vedic gods—Agni, Indra, Varuṇa etc., and finally the *Puruṣa* which is symbolically the poetic description of the Almighty. The *Puruṣa* has the innumerable (lit. thousand) heads, innumerable eyes and innumerable feet. He encompassing the whole universe, stays yet beyond it. Thus the Almighty is expressed in the *Ṛgveda Saṁhitā*. The *Yajurveda* is the *Veda* of worship. It describes the manner in which the Almighty is to be worshipped. It describes several sacrifices. Besides in *Rudrādhyāya* it describes Rudra. Rudra here is described as an embodiment of all sorts of persons of the society whether they are liked or disliked by the Vedic society. Here one has to pay homage to Rudra as *Taskara* (thief) *Kuluñca* (terrible hair plucker). *Sāmaveda Saṁhitā* shows the worship of Almighty through music. *Atharvaveda* describes various other

aspects of the society including medicine. It also describes the Almighty as *Skambha* i.e., pillar or support of the universe. Thus the Almighty is described as *Puruṣa* in *Ṛgveda,* Rudra in *Yajurveda* and *Skambha* in *Atharvaveda.* Therefore, the idea of Almighty was prevalent from the very beginning in Vedic literature in spite of the description of various gods and their various worships and sacrifices. The *Upaniṣads,* however, give a fuller and more emphatic as well as explicit description of the Almighty. Gradually the position of man with reference to the Almighty was made more and more clear. The *Upaniṣads* give the concluding remark only, which may be expressed somewhat in the following manner. The Almighty is most powerful. All the gods, human beings and other animals are powerful through his power. After knowing the Almighty perfectly one attains the Almighty and thus becomes equally powerful with the Almighty. The Almighty pervades the whole universe and yet is beyond it. Then further research was made on the relation of man with the Almighty and different schools of thought developed. According to the *Advaita* (Monism) School of thought, the Almighty is only true and the world is false. He only exists. The world appears as existing due to *Māyā. Viśiṣṭādvaita* (qualified Monism) differs slightly from it. Accordingly the world is a part of the Almighty and the world is not false but equally true with the Almighty. Simply it is a part of the Almighty. *Dvaita* or dualism explains that both God and world are equally true. One has to worship God as the part of his duty. Dualism opens the path for *Bhakti* or devotion. The *Bhakti* school also depicts the several stages of devotion to God or the Almighty. In the first stage the devotee treats himself the *Dāsa* or slave of God who is like a master or lord to the devotee. This stage of devotion is comparable to the devotion depicted in Islam. In the next stage a devotee feels as he is a son of the God. This is called *Vātsalya Bhakti.* This devotion is comparable to the devotion of the Christian approach to the God. In a still higher stage the devotee considers himself to be the father or mother of the God. In a still higher stage the devotee considers himself to be a friend to the God. This is called *Sakhya Bhakti.* In a still higher stage devotee

considers himself to be a lover or beloved of God. This type of devotion is comparable to the devotion of *Gopīs* to the Lord Kṛṣṇa. And the devotion when is still greater the devotee forgets his own identity and the great love for God makes him one with the God, in spite of his formal independent existence in a different body. This is comparable with the devotion of Rādhā with Lord Kṛṣṇa. This type of oneness with the God in spite of the independent existence of body is called *Acintya Bhedābhedavāda* by Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Thus India has critically and elaborately analysed the *Dharma* with its various stages and phases, thus including in itself all the religious approaches in the world and of religions from a highly ancient time.

The most important contribution of the Aryans of India to the world religion is *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā* which examines in every detail, all the possible paths towards God. And it does not ignore at all the normal human life in the society. It emphatically says "Man should not forsake action *(Karma)* and should be unattached to the result of the action." This is the newest path to attain the God. *Gītā* describes all other paths with equall faithfulness. In the twelfth Chapter Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna to take anyone of .the several methods to lead a good spiritual life resulting in the attainment of God. Elsewhere he advises Arjuna how the wise should help the common men, who are attached to the actions i.e., to the results of the actions. The wise should also apparently remain active with them but he should renounce the result of the action:—

na buddhibhedaṁ janayedajñānāṁ karmasaṅgināṁ ।
joṣayetsarvakarmāṇi vidvān yuktaḥ samācaran ॥

(*Gītā* III. 26)

Two important religions of the world Jainism and Buddhism also started in India. I have already pointed out above that Jainism was contemporaneous to the Vedic religion and in a way it was a part of the Vedic religion but disliked and unapproved by most of the followers of the Vedic religion. Subsequently also in *Bhagavadgītā* Chapter 18th in reply to a querry from Arjuna Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that although some say that to be free from the bondage of action, all actions should be forsaken but Kṛṣṇa Himself disapproves this

attitude to life and emphatically says that worship *(Yajña)*. donating and penance *(Tapaḥ)* must be done and should not be forsaken because they purify human beings. Here reference to the people approving inaction is a reference to Jainism which did not have any special name at that time. Ṛṣabhādeva the first of the 24 *Tīrthaṅkaras* of Jainism, has been described as an *Avatāra* (incarnation) of Lord Viṣṇu in *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. But according to the Vedic tradition, the followers of Ṛṣabhadeva subsequently misunderstood it and Jainism took the present shape.

Buddhism comes much later. It adopted a path in between the orthodox Vedic and Jainism. It is said that the string of a lyre is to be made tight for bringing about a musical note but it shoud not be too much tight. The way of life is also comparable to it. Thus Buddhism unknowingly or knowingly is highly influenced by the *Bhagavadgītā*. One may say in the reverse way that the *Gītā* is influenced by the Buddhism but according to the modern researches the date of *Gītā* goes upto 3000 B.C. (vide S.S. Misra: *Aryan Problem—A Linguistic Approach,* p.92). The date of Buddha which is taken to be 6th Century B.C. may be put a few centuries back on the basis of present investigation, (vide S.S. Misra: *Date of Buddha in Fresh Linguistic Evidence,* in press). But even in that case Buddha is definitely later than the *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā* and the Buddhism is influenced by the *Gītā* and the *Gītā* is not influenced by Buddhism.

Buddha's teachings were based on *Gītā* to a great extent. *Sanātana Dharma* accepted Buddhism whole hearteadly, unlike Jainism which was although taken as a part of the *Sanātana Dharma,* was not whole heartedly accepted as the path prescribed was considered to be a bit pessimistic towards life. Ṛṣabhadeva was considered to be an *Avatāra* of Lord Viṣṇu but he was one of the twenty-four *Avatāras*. But Buddha perhaps was given more importance. He was one of the chief ten *Avatāras* of Viṣṇu. He was the ninth *Avatāra*, and the tenth Kalki has yet to come. Even now while indicating time the *Saṅkalpa Mantra* says, "*kaliyuge bauddhāvatāre*...... etc." Although the tradition is still there, Buddhism might have become a bit antagonistic towards the

Vedic tradition which may be chiefly due to its non-tolerance of the animal sacrifices and consequently for some centuries it could flourish outside India but the essential part of Buddhism has nothing antagonistic to *Sanātana Dharma.* In *Sanātana Dharma Ahimsā* (or non-violence) is an important characteristic of a *Brāhmaṇa* who was the spiritual force of the society. Sacrifice of an animal was not considered to be a violence. In Buddhism *Ahimsā* (non-violence) is an important feature but if a *Śramaṇa* or Buddhistic saint gets meats in course of begging alms, he accepts and does not refuse. Thus each side has its own interpretation for the limitation of *Ahimsā.*

It is well-known to scholars that Christianity was highly influenced by the Buddhism. Christianity has one special thing; that is its devotion towards God. It is comparable to the *Dāsya Bhakti* or better *Vātsalya Bhakti.* They might have taken it from the devotion of Buddhists towards Buddha. It is also not unlikely that Christ came to India and was influenced by the other aspects of *Sanātana Dharma.* The unrecorded period of the life of Christ might be indicating to his presence in India and in different parts of India. Some people in several parts of India claim that Christ came for spiritual training to that part of India, especially to Puri and Kashmir.

It is also well-known that Islam has been influenced by Christianity and Judaism. They talk of the same common tradition. Only it looks much different because Christ showed maximum tolerance. But Mohammad although started with tolerance had to be non-tolerant to tackle the antagonistic situation towards Islam. Judaism is the fore-runner of the Christianity and Islam. But we have no direct evidence as yet to show the influence of *Sanātana Dharma* on Judaism. But since *Sanātana Dharma* is *Dharma* or *Mānava Dharma,* the attitude to life and God of Judaism is comparable to the similar attitude of *Sanātana Dharma.* Since *Sanātana Dharma* is very old being beyond 5000 B.C., it is likely that at some stage Judaism was influenced by *Sanātana Dharma.* Bible including both the Old and New Testament has Arabia as the place of its original incident but it always looks at

the East for the place of Eden Garden and Paradise. It has an indirect reference to India which was the actual spiritual source.

Zorostrianism is clearly a development of Vedic religion. Many Vedic gods are same in Avestan, e.g., Skt. soma, Avestan—Haoma; Skt. Mitra, Av. Mithra. Some gods have same characteristic but different names as Vedic *Varuṇa* and Avestan Ahuramazdā. Some Vedic gods are evil spirits in Avestan, e.g., Indra. There is a theory that some Vedic Aryans were separated with an antagonistic attitude and left for Iran. They moved from place to place before reaching Iran and much later after the Muslim invasion in Iran they came back to their original motherland that is India (vide S.S. Misra: *Aryan Problem—A Linguistic Approach* p. 42-45). The language of Avestan differs from the language of Vedic *Saṁskṛta* almost like the difference of the language of *Saṁskṛta* and *Prākṛta.*

This article is not a place to discuss in detail about other religion but they can be associated with the *Sanātana Dharma,* for example the Greek and Latin mythology shows various gods which are comparable to Vedic and Puranic gods on the basis of their nature and characteristics. For example the Greek Latin mythology has Zeuspater, Latin Zupiter compare *Saṁskṛta Dyauḥ Pitā.* Both *Sanātana Dharma* and Greek-Latin mythology show goddess of learning and other gods and goddesses of various powers. Now it is known that Aryans from India went to various parts of Europe and settled there (vide *Aryan Problem—A Linguistic Approach).* The *Sanātana Dharma* was taken by them which somehow took a slightly variant shape on the basis of the situations, understanding and the need of time.

Thus *Sanātana Dharma* is a source of the world religions.

The knowledge that Śrī Vāsudeva is dwelling in the heart of every living creature is the eternal and abiding principle of *Sanātana Dharma.*

Dharma in Mahābhārata

—R. N. Lakhotia

Right from the very ancient times *Dharma* has been accepted as an ideal of human life and has accordingly fascinated and inspired the people. There are various scriptures and other books in India extolling the virtues of life led as per *Dharma*. *Mahābhārata* of Vyāsa is an epic which is replete with varied instances of *Dharma*. It is rightly said that to understand *Mahābhārata* is to understand life in its profundity and wisdom. *Mahābhārata* gives some of the wisest practical advice and guidance on righteous living i.e., living as per the principles of *Dharma* as well as the most sublime teachings of a philosophical nature. In fact, *Mahābhārata* brings out the deepest experience of man in both the worldly and the spiritual fields of life. It is not only the most valuable literature but is also the biggest in size with about one lakh verses among all the *Granthas* written by Veda Vyāsa.

In the narration of history of *Kauravas* and *Pāṇḍavas, Dharma* is brought out in many ways. In particular the advice given by Bhīṣma to *Dharmaputra* i. e., Yudhiṣṭhira is extensively dealt with in *Śānti* and *Anuśāsana Parvas* of the *Mahābhārata*. Likewise, Vidura is reputed in the *Mahābhārata* for giving sane advice and possessing sound wisdom. These counsels are useful for all people of all countries at all times to lead a good life. The great *Upadeśa* of the *Bhagavadgītā* by Lord Kṛṣṇa also appears in the *Mahābhārata*. In fact it can be said that men and women in India from one end of the country to the other, whether young or old, whether rich or poor, whether high or low, whether simple or sophisticated, still derive entertainment, inspiration and guidance from the *Mahābhārata*. In fact, there is no department of Indian life, public or private which is not effectively influenced by this

great epic. *Mahābhārata* is simultaneously *Arthaśāstra, Dharmaśastra, Kāmaśāstra* and *Mokṣaśāstra*. In fact it has been called as 'fifth *Veda*', of material, spiritual, physical and metaphysical life of the Indian masses. The message of *Mahābhārata* is that modern India (Bharata) must be turned again into a *Dharmakṣetra-Kurukṣetra*. In fact the characters (with the sole exception of Kṛṣṇa) of *Mahābhārata* are not divine but are human, and as capable of greatness and debasement, as those of any of our contemporary heroes.

Rājadharma—

Let us now discuss some of the examples of *Dharma*. We may start with the advice given by Bhīṣma to Yudhiṣṭhira. At the end of the *Mahābhārata,* Yudhiṣṭhira was over whelmed by grief and refused to be enthroned as a king. He was then told by Lord Kṛṣṇa to go to the venerable Bhīṣma, lying on his bed of arrows in the battle field, awaiting death, as per his desire. Bhīṣma in the *Śānti Parva* expounds such principles of *Rāja-Dharma,* as should be learnt by the kings or rulers eager to be really enlightened about statecraft. These principles of *Rāja-Dharma* are very relevant for the present rulers. Bhīṣma also continues his sermons in two other sections of the *Śānti Parva* and in the *Anuśāsana Parva*. These two *Parvas* are scintillating examples of didactic literature, saturated with the exhortations of Bhīṣma on philosophy, religion, ethics, law, statecraft, and the art of war in the form of dialogues and moral stories. In the *Śānti Parva,* there is a well-considered attempt to highlight the form and objectives of an ideal state. Let us have a close look at the *Rājadharma Parva* sub-section. In this sub-section Bhīṣma postulates to Yudhiṣṭhira the do's and dont's of a king vis-a-vis people's welfare. He says to Yudhiṣṭhira the all-pervasiveness of *Rāja-Dharma* and its superiority over all other *Dharmas*. The entire stretch of 82 chapters is saturated with his wise counsel. It is a wonderful combination of the spiritual and secular aspects of human existence. Bhīṣma points out that the life of a king is a mission and he must always remind himself that he happens to be a king only for fulfilling his obligations towards society and not for

deriving worldly pleasure. In fact, he should always subordinate his own interests to the interests of his subjects. As a matter of fact, the king should treat his subjects as his own family without any bias and should not evade punishing even the offences committed by his own sons and favourite persons. Bhīṣma says that a king should be seeker of the good i.e., the *Śreya* and not the pleasurable i.e., the *Preya*. He should be chaste in body, mind and words. He should be truthful, trustworthy, virtuous and altruistic. He should be enterprising but selfless, careful and adept. He should be conscientious and simple, hospitable and merciful, yet pragmatic and unbiased. Above all, a king should be the follower of *Ahiṁsā* in spirit. He should be disciplined and self-controlled. A king following the principles of *Rāja-Dharma* does not despise the weak, slight the enemies, hate anyone, do any work in haste, or procrastinate.

Righteousness in Life—

In fact in the *Svargārohaṇa Parva, Dharma* has been taken as the source for *Artha* i.e., (wealth) and *Kāma* i.e., (desire) by all the religions in India. However, the meaning and significance are not the same in all religions. This is because the ways of *Dharma* are inscrutable. For, the best way for the people is to follow the right people as it is said, "*dharmasya tattvaṁ nihitaṁ guhāyāṁ mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ.*" Whenever a person is faced with opposing pulls due to strong moral values, the problem that arises is to determine their relative strength and to take decision in that context. In resolving such disputes and conflicts, the motives and intentions have also to be taken into account. Fortunately, perhaps *Mahābhārata* deals with *Dharma* in all its ramifications and allows flexibility under special situations.

When Yudhiṣṭhira asked Bhīṣma about the indications of the good and the wicked, the reply of Bhīṣma spells out the nature of true righteousness in ordinary life. Bhīṣma said that "the wicked are ungovernable and foul-mouthed". What the virtuous do on the other hand is regarded as the clue to the course of conduct which is called good. The virtuous stand aside and give the way to the old, those carrying heavy burdens, women, those in authority

in the village or town administration, *Brāhmaṇas,* and kings. Good conduct is the root of all prosperity, fame and longevity. Indeed it is said to be superior to all branches of knowledge. Thus Bhīṣma has emphasized, the true practical that is good conduct. Bhīṣma further stated that the bliss which is the fruit of righteousness is not eternal as it is destined to come to an end in certain cases. However, righteousness itself is eternal. Righteousness alone is one's friend as per the advice of Bhīṣma. Thus the message of *Mahābhārata* is the message of truth and righteousness. All the various *Dharmas* or duties of different types of people in all walks of life, are enumerated in the epic at various places. If we examine the various characters of *Mahābhārata,* we find that the blind king Dhṛtarāṣṭra represents ignorance, Yudhiṣṭhira represents righteousness, while Duryodhana represents unrighteousness, Arjuna, the individual soul and Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme soul. *Kurukṣetra* where the mighty battle was waged represents our mind. These have universal significance.

Yakṣa Praśna—

The *Yakṣa Praśna* is one of the various short stories that appear in *Mahābhārata.* This occurs in the *Araṇya Parva.* It is a dialogue in the form of questions and answers between a *Yakṣa* (spirit) and Yudhiṣṭhira *(Dharmaputra)* dealing with *Dharma* as related to family, society and individuals. Some of the questions are in the nature of riddles and deal with profound things. We give a few samples below:—

"What makes the Sun rise ? The *Vedas.*
Who are his attendants ? The *Devas.*
What makes him set ? *Dharma.*
Where is he established ? In Truth".

Some of the other questions and answers may also be considered for example:

Question:"By renouncing which does man become lovable ? Renouncing which, one does not get grief ? By renouncing which does one become wealthy ? By renouncing which is one happy" ?

The answers given are:—

"By giving up pride one becomes lovable. By eschewing anger

one does not experience grief. By renouncing desire one becomes wealthy. One is happy if he has no avarice. These stand between us and peace of mind." It is also mentioned further that egoism is the highest ignorance, and boasting about one's own *Dharma* and loudly proclaiming it, is conceit.

State Administration—

Nārada asked more than 100 questions to king Yudhiṣṭhira. Nārada's questionnaire is still substantially relevant in the present day democratic set up. If the modern administrator were to browse through these ancient posers on wisdom he would certainly improve his efficiency. In the questions Nārada asked whether the farmers and other poor people were happy in his kingdom and whether all the members of the forces and other employees were getting their salary and allowances regularly. Nārada even asked the king whether he took care of the wives of those who have sacrificed their lives to protect him and win a victory for him. Nārada emphasized the need specially for sound financial advice. Nārada also cautioned Yudhiṣṭhira against corruption. In fact, Nārada in *Mahābhārata* has a view about proper welfare state where the poor and the weak would be cared for.

Sanatsujātīya—

The *Mahābhārata* which is a great store-house of knowledge on various aspects concerning life including *Dharma* contains three precious jewels. They are the *Sanatsujātīya*, the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma*. *Sanatsujātīya,* appearing in the *Udyoga Parva,* is a terse treatise of 546 verses in four chapters dealing with the nature of death and life leading to *Brahma Vidyā*. It is a discourse given by Brahmā's son *Sanatsujāta* to king Dhṛtarāṣṭra who was plunged into grief and delusion at the impending war between his sons and *Pāṇḍavas*.

Bhagavadgītā—

Among the achievements of Kṛṣṇa in the *Mahābhārata* there is none so rare and precious as the *Bhagavadgītā*. It has quietened and strengthened many troubled hearts so that the union with the divine may be achieved and maintained in the midst of worldly affairs. This is the central lesson of the *Bhagavadgītā*.

Lord Kṛṣṇa's message is universal. "Whenever there is a decay of righteousness, O Bhārata, and rise of unrighteousness then I manifest Myself. For the protection of the good, for destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness, I am born in every age," says Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Atithi Dharma—

The guest has to be honoured like a god. This is a long standing tradition highlighted in the great epic *Mahābhārata*. When the *Pāṇḍavas* were about to enter the forests after having been denied their rights, a number of mendicant-*Brāhmaṇas* stood before them. A learned Brahmin by name Śaunaka advised Yudhiṣṭhira to free himself of the desire of worldly wealth. As per the *Mahābhārata* even an enemy is not to be denied hospitality (*Śānti Parva* 145.5). Practice of *Atithi Dharma* is thus an integral part of a house-holder's life. Nothing could be more welcome than seeing a guest contented, which in turn pleases the gods.

Ahiṁsā—

Mahābhārata extols the virtues of *Ahiṁsā* "*Ahiṁsā* is the highest *Dharma*. It is the highest purification. It is also the highest truth from which all *Dharmas* proceed."

Message of Mahābhārata—

Mahābhārata has thus a universal message on *Dharma* for all people of the world. It loudly proclaims that not at the cost of lust, fear, greed or even life should *Dharma* be surrendered. This is the ultimate teaching of *Mahābhārata* which declares "One should never do that to another which one regards as injurious to one's ownself."

> The face of the Eternal Truth is hidden by golden disc. O sun, remove it, so that I may have the vision whose essence is reality. O Nourisher ! O Supreme *Ṛṣi* ! O Controller of all ! O Sun ! O Lord of all ! remove and withdraw Thy blinding rays, so that I may behold Thy most auspicious glory and forms; the Being in Thee is myself.

Dharma or Duty

—*M. Ravi Chandran*

Introduction—

Dharma or duty is a comprehensive doctrine of duties and rights of individuals in an ideal society. Among its meanings we may list human duty, family duty, social duty, spiritual duty, cultural duty and political duty. Primarily *Dharma,* then, would mean a corpus of duties essential for the sound organization of human societies. But *Dharma* means more than just a code of duties for it is also understood as a mystic force capable of rewarding and punishing human beings through its mysterious workings.

The term Dharma—

The term *Dharma* is derived from the root word *Dhṛ* which means to sustain, uphold, hold together. Its predecessor seems to be the early Vedic concept of *Ṛta. Ṛta* is a cosmic force and to its laws even the gods are subject. *Ṛta* and *Yajña* are the twin concepts which run through the whole fabric of early Indian social and moral thought. *Ṛta* means as much the physical order of the universe, as the due order of sacrifices and the moral law in the world. *Ṛta* however, did not entirely disappear for it was transformed into the concept of *Dharma* which held such decisive sway over Indian thinking through the ages. Alongside of *Ṛta* the idea of *Dharma* also evolves in the Vedic literature. *Dharma* then comes to mean custom, moral laws, laws or duties in general what is right etc.

The concept of Dharma—

In the *Brāhmaṇas* the concept of *Dharma* largely supersedes the old concept of *Ṛta* and for obvious reasons. As the complexity of social organization increased, the old concept *Ṛta* was found to be inadequate whereas the concept of *Dharma* was able to answer practically all the needs of the evolving situation (A. Berridale Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of The Veda* II. p. 479). *Dharma,*

then, gradually emerges as a code of duties towards gods, sages, manes, men and the lower orders of creation (S. Rādhākṛṣnan, *Indian Philosophy,* I. p. 131). Pāṇini, the clebrated *Saṁskṛta* grammarian of the 5th century B.C., interprets *Dharma* as an act of religious merit and custom or usage (V.S. Agrawāla, *India as Known to Pāṇini.* p. 146). The *Dharmaśāstras* further elaborate the concept as the "sum total of the distinctive duties of the constituent units of social system comprising the four castes *(Varṇas)* and the four orders *(Āśramas)*" giving it a social basis in the task of creating basic principles of a cohesive social order (U. N. Ghoṣāla, *A History of Indian Political Ideas,* p. 43). From this onward it was only necessary to apply the concept to the totality of human actions and transform it into a comprehensive philosophy of life. Thus it came to mean "morally proper, ethical duty, virtue, good works, religious duty, religious virtue, ideal, absolute truth, universal law or principle, divine justice, convention, code of customs and traditions, canon law or law, intertribal law" (Gulatherus H. Mees: *Dharma and Society,* p. 8-9). In this wise *Dharma* meant not only the ethical norm, a religious duty, a mystical entity and an ideal but also implied economic, political, racial, and professional rules of conduct. Then, Manu, the great law-giver, describes the *Vedas, Smṛtis,* character, conduct of virtuous people and reason as the sources of *Dharma (Mānavadharmaśāstra* II. 6). Yājñavalkya and other *Smṛti*-writers give a similar list of sources *(Yājñavalkyasmṛti* II. 1. 1—36. 9) and the *Mahābhārata* lists truth, wholesome custom and applicability *(Upāya)* as sources of *Dharma (Mahābhārata* XII. 101.2—5). *Dharma,* thus, is not merely tradition or custom but also truth and reason, for if tradition is in conflict with truth or reason then it can scarcely be called *Dharma.*

Then, *Dharma* began as a code of human behaviour and developed into a mystical entity. The *Upaniṣads* speak of it as the foundation of the whole universe for through it one drives away evil, on it everything is founded and hence it is called the highest good *(Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* X. 79). Kauṭilya calls *Dharma* the eternal truth holding its sway over the world *(Arthaśāstra* III. 1)

and the *Mahābhārata* defines it in terms of its capacity for the sustenance of the world (*Mahābhārata* XII. 110. 10-11). The *Rāmāyaṇa* indicates *Dharma* as a source of profit and pleasure, the essence and strength of the world *(Rāmāyaṇa* III. 9.30). As the Buddhists put it, it is *Dharma* which makes the difference between good and evil, *Dharma* is the ruler of rulers, the highest in the world *(Aṅguttara Nikāya* III. p. 149). *Dharma* it is, that infuses an element of morality into the brute force wielded by the state and it also bases economic and social relations between men and societies on the ground of moral spiritual values. For *Dharma* though understood severally is universal as *Mānavadharma,* the *Dharma* of all beings irrespective of the distinctions of caste, creed, colour and wealth, status and inclination. As an urge within oneself to do aught that is right and proper, *Dharma* it is "which makes man seek for happiness in this world and the next. *Dharma* is established on work; *Dharma* is impelling man day and night to run after and work for happiness" (Swāmī Vivekānanda *Complete Works* V. p. 349).

Social aspects of the concept of Dharma—

The social aspects of the concept of *Dharma* are seen in the social operation.

1. Varṇadharma—

The *Varṇadharma* came to mean the predetermined duties of citizens and members of the various social orders sharply defining the legitimate from the objectionable. *Varṇa* (caste) is a unique social institution in many ways. Caste is based on hereditary membership and controls occupations, use of food and drink, marriage and social intercourse and in many cases has forms of social control designed to enforce compliance with the rules and regulations of the institutions. The duties of the four castes as follows—(1)*Brāhmaṇa*—study, teaching, performance of sacrifices, officiating at sacrifices and giving and receiving gifts. (2)*Kṣatriya*—study, performances of sacrifices, giving gifts, military occupations and protection of the life and property of others. (3) *Vaiśya*—study, performance of sacrifices, giving gifts, agriculture, cattle-breeding, trade, profession of artisans.



Vānaprastha Āśrama

(4)*Śūdra*—serving the twice-born, agriculture, cattle-breeding, trade, profession of artisans and court-bards. Two points need some comment here. One is the use of the term twice-born. It refers to the sacrament of investiture with sacred thread *(Upanayana)* which was denied to the *Śūdra* and regarded as obligatory for the others. This meant that the *Śūdra* was always regarded as ritually impure since only with the performance of the sacrament could an individual claim the right to study the sacred lore. The second point is the close similarity in the professions regarded as legitimate for the *Vaiśya* and the *Śūdra*. This similarity clearly indicates the fact that the acceptance of the *Śūdra* group as a constituent of Aryan society meant a certain elevation in its status which led to a subsidence in the status of the *Vaiśya* since the line dividing the *Vaiśya* from the *Śūdra* on occupational grounds was rendered very thin indeed. The real difference between the *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra*, then, lay in the ritual impurity of the latter.

2.Āśramadharma—

Closely associated with *Varṇadharma*, in fact standing as a corollary of it, is the concept of *Āśramadharma*. The earliest texts mention only the first three namely *Brahmacarya* (studentship), *Gṛhastha* (householder) and *Vānaprastha* (hermit) and it is possible that the fourth and the last, *Saṁnyāsa* (complete renunciation) came to be fitted into the general scheme of life at a later stage. These four *Āśramas* indicate a view of life that is of great significance in our understanding of the spirit of life in India. They are based on the supposition that all life is a preparation for salvation, and hence, must be properly organized both for individual and social welfare. They are so designed as to facilitate the realization of the four ideals of life namely, *Dharma*, *Artha*, (economic welfare), *Kāma* (biological and cultural fulfilment) and *Mokṣa* (salvation). In the first phase a man is expected to learn all about the spiritual and cultural traditions of his people by which the continuity of the cultural tradition is ensured through education of the young. During the second stage the economic, biological and cultural demands of society and life

are met. In the third stage, he is expected to rise above mundane interests and in the fourth, he actively strives for the realization of the supreme end of all life, salvation. The *Āśramas,* aimed at the fullest development of the individual and the social group in which he lived and of which he was a part. The two traditions which they subserve are those of *Dharma* (social preservation and growth) and *Yajña* (the moulding of human personality in such a manner as to eliminate friction and aid individual development through the spirit of sacrifice).

3.Kuladharma—

Besides the *Varṇa* and *Āśrama* the concept of *Dharma* also regulated behaviour in the family. This *Kuladharma* meant a set of filial and ritual duties and its object was the general fulfilment of the four ideals of life. In the matter of filial relations *Kuladharma* meant the proper conduct of the different members of the family towards each other whereas in ritual matters it indicated the performance of the "five great sacrifices" which enabled the householder to expiate possible sins committed through the use of the hearth, grinding-stone, broom, pestle and mortar and the water-vessel *(Mānavadhramaśāstra* III. 67). The five great sacrifices are offered to the memory of the sages of the past and embodied in teaching and study *(Brahmayajña),* sacrifice to the spirits of the ancestors *(Pitṛyajña),* offering to spirits *(Bhūtayajña),* hospitality to guests and strangers *(Atithiyajña)* and sacrifice for the sake of humanity *(Nṛyajña) (Mānavadharmaśāstra* III. 68-69). It is this *Kuladharma* which is the basis of the psychology of spiritual continuity in the life of the family and thus becomes a means of familial integration for the people.

4.Kāla and Deśadharma—

Then there are the *Kāla* (time) and *Deśa* (region-place) which are also related to the concept of *Dharma*. Age and region would largely influence men's conduct for what is *Dharma* in one place may not be *Dharma* in another. The code of *Kāla* and *Deśa Dharma* demanded of man a discriminating compliance with customs and usages of time and place in the context of which his life is lived in the world. Each period of time, it is recognized, has its

own norms of behaviour and judgement and its own distinct set of values and this *Yugadharma* changes according to the cultural quality of the age. The norms of the hypothetical *Satyayuga* cannot be practicable for the *Kaliyuga* when there is a general decline in standards. What the concepts of *Kāla* and *Deśa* imply is that given the difference in outlooks and attitudes of different periods and climes, the details of a scheme of human conduct cannot be the same at all times and in all places. This prevented the concept of *Dharma* from becoming a stratified idea by leaving the possibility open for changes in its institutionalized character.

5. Rājadharma—

Finally we have *Dharma* as the basis of power *(Rājadharma)*. This concept grows in relation to the development of political thought in India. *Dharma* is declared as the ruler of rulers; it is the mystic force which enables the king to rule but also destroys a wicked ruler bent on violating its ordinances. The content of the sovereignty of the state is force *(Daṇḍa)* which must be used solely for enforcing the ordinances of *Dharma*. The ideal state, thus, upholds the *Dharma* in all its majesty and multiplicity. The state exists for the protection of the *Dharma* of three ideals *Dharma, Artha* and *Kāma* and the concept of *Dharma* was obviously meant as an instrument for infusing a moral content into what otherwise would have been naked and brutal force wielded by the state.

Thus, we have seen the comprehensiveness of the concept of *Dharma* and examined its operations in some aspects of individual and social action. *Dharma* is a code of duty, law, truth and a host of other things among which there is also the sense of *Dharma* as spiritual value. It is true that *Dharma, Artha* and *Kāma* must co-exist without harming each other *(Mānava-dharmaśāsta* II. 224), but among these the importance of *Dharma* is the highest since it is the means of self-realization brought about through an intense application of *Dharma* to the highest problems of life *(Yājñayavalkyasmṛti* I.1, 1—3, 6—9). *Dharma*, therefore, is a spiritual value for the acquisition of which our entire life must be lived.

Dharma-modern view—

Finally there is the meaning of *Dharma* as culture. T. S.Eliot described culture as "that which makes life worth living" *(Notes towards a Definition of Culture* p. 27). We have seen earlier that it is the concept of *Dharma* that lends significance to human endeavour according to Indian thinking on the subject. *Dharma* is an instrument of cohesion and integration and as such it imparts its flavour to the whole corpus of values which go by the name of Indian culture. There is hardly any other single term which can so adequately bring out the essence of the Indian attitude to the concept of culture as *Dharma*. The cultured man is called *Dhammattha* in many Buddhist texts and he is described as steadfast in morality, truth, wisdom and compassion *(Dhammapada* XVI. 9; VIII. 12; X. 14; XIV. 15). He is essentially a tolerant man for he is aware that just as he holds his *Dharma* dear the *Dharma* of others has equal relevance and validity for them.

Conclusion—

The range of thought encompassed by the concept of *Dharma*, thus, is most comprehensive. It affects social groups *(Varṇa-dharma)*, and ethical and spiritual striving in an individual's life *(Āśramadharma)*, families *(Kuladharma)* and regions *(Deśa-dharma)*, periods of time *(Yugadharma)* and humanity *(Mānava-dharma)*. And it controls the state *(Rājadharma)* and thus becomes the instrument of moralizing force. It has so completely permeated Indian thinking and manifested itself so repeatedly and continuously in action that it has almost become the central point of all thought on religion and metaphysics, ethics and polity, law and filial behaviour. One of the meanings of the term *Dharma* is quality or attribute or characteristic and through its universality the concept of *Dharma* has become a norm for all human action.

Secularism: Precept and Practice

—Dr. P.P Sharma

The air these days is thick with all kinds of slogans and shibboleths and secularism surely is one such. Its constant repetition has induced in us—the hearers as well as the users—a false sense of familiarity, making us believe that we all understand what it means, whereas the fact remains that we generally don't. The publicists and politicians are really to blame for this deplorable semantic confusion. They indiscriminately use this term according to their convenience. The self-styled nationalists are in the habit of declaring their commitment to secularism without fully realizing what such a statement involves. What is more, they want others should also follow the same pattern. The question that has to be asked, however, is what this wholesale prescription of secularism actually means for the individual as well as the community.

One of the basic tenets of secularism is that you have no business to look beyond what may be described as the terrestrial horizon. Your existence here and now is all that matters. All talk about the hereafter or life beyond the grave, physical dissolution that is, is little short of arrant nonsense or sheer bunkum. Whatever cannot be experimented with, whatever does not admit of verifiability and reproducibility has to be unhesitatingly discarded for the simple reason it is irrational and unscientific . If a scientist proclaims, after a careful scrutiny and investigation, something as a truth, another scientist anywhere in the world working on the same problem should be able to arrive at an identical solution. And this process can be repeated by any number of scientists *ad infinitum.* If the results obtained subsequently do not confirm the original finding, the hypothesis is to be rejected forthwith. Secularism insists on this test being

scrupulously applied before any concept or notion is considered worthy of credence. Now will all these who so stridently swear by secularism be willing to pay this price for the ideal they are so aggressively flaunting in everybody's face ?

Let me spell out briefly for their benefit what its implications for them would be. The palpable tangible universe in front of and around them, is the only reality they have to reckon with. There is nothing like an agent outside it. The word 'transcendent' would then be completely alien to their approved vocabulary. Out goes all belief in the first cause of divinity in all its forms and manifestations. Your right to visit any holy shrine will immediately become forfeit. Participation in any rituals and ceremonies ordained by this religion or that will have to be looked upon as deviant behaviour.

I will not make you fuss over or mourn the death of God, if as a secularist you have opted for it of your own free choice (or else your claim to be regarded as a secularist is nothing more than an empty rhetorical gesture). Also you must be prepared to do without a few other things. Neither invoke the deity as you are wont to do, and if you are honest to the core, let it not enter your consciousness. Consider the hard toil you will have to undergo to forge and fashion an entirely new mode of thinking and perceiving. Even the traditional language will let you down as your secularism while being run into its ready-made moulds cannot but be severely bruised by it.

What kind of life will it be under the regimen of secularism ? It will be a life lived throughout in a profane world in a dismal round of unvarying routine trivia, unvisited by any the least fugitive gleam of the supernatural. Religion with its lives of saints and seers, with its spiritual frame of reference, with its stories and legends, with scriptural and sacred lore will be anathema in this utterly mundane scheme of things. Pragmatism, sheer technical skill and the means to achieve the desired result (there will be, it must be pointed out, no criteria to judge the worthwhileness or lack of it) will be the new gods installed in this clinically disinfected pantheon. What will work, will be the credo of this down-to earth

no-nonsense gospel, if I may use such a misnomer. All means will be justified to secure the end one has set ones heart upon, there obviously being no constraints whatsoever based on norms and values. If, for instance, you aim to pile up wealth or acquire political power and influence, go straightforwardly and uninhibitedly after it without making any fetish as to what ought or ought not to be done. There are no realms beyond this solid terrain, this *terra firma* and the one infallible formula is to keep ones nose perpetually stuck to the ground without looking up to the sky and wasting a precious moment over a twinkling star or being carried away by something swimming into your ken up there.

Those who are extolling secularism as the highest virtue under the pressure of political exigencies have a precious little idea of what they are bargaining for. Within the earth-bound parameters, what will man aspire for ? What heights will there be to beckon his soul to soar aloft ? At best, he can manage to keep himself busy with little everyday chores, which for want of a commanding and all-enfolding purpose, can never form into a coherent and integral whole. Some of the choicest spirits of the most creative and perceptive minds of the west are currently experiencing a tremendous anguish which steams from the contemplation of this scenario—a world plagued by desolation and utter futility. The terms laid down by secularism to live one's life are extremely constrictive as they hold out no vision of this life opening out into and forming part of a vaster and more meaningful panorama.

To come down to brass tacks. Can secularism, a few salient features of which have been adumbrated in the foregoing paragraphs, be ever acceptable to the masses in this country ? Or even to the so-called elite ? Will the ingrained habits of thought and feeling developed over the centuries, be so dramatically (or traumatically) altered under the bulldozing propaganda or the proselytizing compaign of the ruling clique and its allies ? What, therefore, they should in effect, be talking about, is not secularism but understanding of and love for each other's religion. They are unnecessarily using a pompous and ambiguous word for a simple thing. But I would like to contend that for

promoting harmony and amity among various religions we don't want people to become apathetic or indifferent to their own religions, rather, they should be more firmly anchored in them. Before we reach out to others let us first learn to love those closest to us. The Hindu mind, moulded by centuries-old tradition of mutual accommodation and tolerance, always extended a warm welcome to every religion it came in contact with, as it was profoundly religious and spiritual. Fed as it was by the perennial wisdom of the ancient sages, from it flowed the prayer—"May all the worlds be filled with joy." There are, no doubt, such finely tuned kindred souls among the followers of other religions also. In contrast to them are the loud-mouthed champions of secularism who are least bothered about the discrepancy between precept and practice.

Only when a man suffers from a sense of duality, does he see the other, smell the other, suck the other, talk of another, hear the other, bother about the other, touch the other and know the other. But, where one and the only one self pervades all, there is nothing separate. There are no sense organs separate from self, to see, smell or talk. There remains nothing separate from self to be heard of, bothered about, touched with and known. That, through which all is known and which is knowledge as such, cannot be known through any sense organ, mind or intellect.

—Swami Rama Tirtha

Good and evil there always are in the world. Many forget there is any evil—at least they try to forget; and when evil comes upon, they are overwhelmed by it and feel bitter. There are others who deny that there is any evil all and consider everything good. That also is a weakness; that also proceeds from a fear of evil. If something is evil-smelling, why sprinkle it with rose water and call it fragrant ? Yes, there are good and evil in the world—God has put evil in the world. But you do not have to whitewash Him. Why there is evil is none of your business. Please have faith and keep quiet.

—Swami Vivekananda

Contribution of Sanātana Dharma in Making Our Constitution

—*R. C. M. Tripathi*

We know our constitution is federal but it can become unitary at the time of emergency if it arises. What is constitution after all ? It is a code that decides mutual relations between the citizen and the state. In federal system it decides the mutual relation between the two states, state and the centre, Legislature and Executive , Executive and Judiciary, Judiciary and Legislature; between the President and the council of Ministers, the Governors and the states on one hand and the President on the other. In nut shell the constitution provides means and ways to run the administration of the country smoothly and without a clash. Even then we hear every now and then the voice of dissatisfaction from this state or that, from some prominent political leader or a bomb exploded by some terrorist. Even after a number of ammendments our constitution could not find a permanent solution of our problems which are indeed monstrous in shape and size. It is a matter for introspection to our political leaders and sociologists.

The next thing which requires our attention, is the term 'Federation.' What is federation ? Federation is an association of associations in loose terms. When many states agree to come under and become parts of a central organization maintaining their separate individual existence but sparing some of their rights and powers particularly those concerning to all of the states, then that central organization is termed as 'Federation'. Federal Governments generally undertake jobs which are not possible or deemed feasible for any individual state or states like foreign relation,defence and gigantic industry and so on.

The origin of federal ideology we find in its seed form in *Purāṇas* and even in earlier literature. It is not a remark to be

laughed at. It deserves some consideration. I do not claim that modern federal system of America and other countries is a fructification of Puranic thinking but I do claim that it is not an entirely new concept unknown to Indian thinkers and Indian genius.

I invite a reference to *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, Durgā Saptaśatī,* chapter II *Śloka* 9 to 31. It was when Mahiṣāsura crushed the heavenly bodies, defeated Indra along with all other gods and enjoyed the rights of sungod, fire-god, water-god etc., and the poor gods found the ground slipping from under their feet, they approached Lord Viṣṇu for the remedial measure. Then what happened ? Instantly there was an incarnation of federal power. Viṣṇu got furious and so was Lord Śambhu. From their ferocious faces came out a flame burning with radiance and splendour. From the faces of all gods, a radiant splendour came out and became one with the principal one. It was not a case of amalgamation but it was assimilation. And Lo, it was converted into a beautiful charming lady—the goddess Durgā. Each of her bodily part was consisted of the splendour of some god—this or that.

The god's were happy to see their hope materialised in the form of a lovely lady. Then followed the process of contributing weapons, emblems and ornaments. Lord Śiva gave her *Triśūla* (trident), Kṛṣṇa gave a *Cakra,* Varuṇa a *Śaṅkha,* the fire-god gave her a *Śakti,* Marut gave a bow and a quiver full of arrows. Indra produced a thunderbolt from his original one and gave it to her. He further gave *Ghaṇṭā* to her. Lord Yama gave a *Daṇḍa,* Varuṇa gave *Pāśa,* Prajāpati gave her a rosery of *Rudrākṣa* where as Brahmā gave a *Kamaṇḍalu.* This way every god contributed this thing or that to equip her to fight against that formidable enemy Mahiṣāsura. Thus equipped in this way the invincible lady roared like a lion.'

संघे शक्तिः कलौ युगे।

In *Kaliyuga* the might rests in federation only. Now Durgā, the Dame Federal having immeasurable strength and might, threw gauntlet before the demon. She spoke to his emissary in a unique fashion. she invited him to have her hands but only after defeating her in a combat. She said—

यो मां जयति संग्रामे यो मे दर्पं व्यपोहति ।
यो मे प्रतिबलो लोके स मे भर्ता भविष्यति ॥

(*Durgāsaptaśatī* V. 120)

"Only he will be my husband who may overpower me in a fight, who may be able to break my pride and is possessing a matching valour."

It was like applying a burning stick to the heap of gun-powder. There was a big blast which swallowed the entire demon race. The collective federal strength of the heaven was victorious though individually every god was defeated previously.

Another reference from *Bhāgavata* can be invited. It is the incarnation of Lord Vāmana (VIII. 18. 14—17) When he was furnished with necessary paraphernalia demanded by the occasion. This time it was an asectic Brahmin student so no contribution of weapons. This time it was skillful Viṣṇu alone morally supported by gods who outwitted Bali and liberated Indra and enthroned him again to the power. What tricks He played is quite immaterial.

It will be rather fantastic to say that the great American Charter derived any inspiration from or owes its origin to Puranic sources yet it can be undoubtedly said that the central idea of federalism was present in Indian polity and brought in practice also when the circumstances so required. We know that our constitution-builders depended on American constitution to a great extent. What I intend to say is that the present constitution of ours is not against the Indian way of polity. Not only that but it has got the approval and support of *Sanātana Dharma* through its scriptures.

Sanātana Dharma and Indian democracy—

"Democracy is a Government of the people, for the people and by the people"; this is how the great Abraham Lincon defined the term democracy. But I often think in my mind that the present democratic governments of the world fail to fulfil the aspirations and ambitions of that great political thinker. Modern democracy seems to be neither 'of the people' nor 'by the people' and it certainly is not 'for the people'. In my opinion the best government is that which gives a foremost place for the interests

of the people, whether it is run by the people or not, is quite immaterial. There is no scope in this article to present a critical view of modern politico-administrative machinary of the country or the world. What is intended here to show is what type of government was recommended by *Sanātana Dharma* and to what extent that type agrees or disagrees with the present system.

India had always been in favour of autocracy or monarchic system of Government. Even though during lifetime of Buddha there was Vaishali of Licchavis where the administrative system was more or less republic yet the generality was monarchic. There was the great empire of Magadha side by side. As a matter of fact the Indian metaphysical thinking always influenced each and every walk of Indian life. Monistic thoughts always favoured a king no doubt, yet the welfare of the masses was given top importance. From the first and greatest law-giver Manu to Kautilya, every social philosopher or political expert emphasized the public good as the foremost duty of the state. Vālmīki felt no hesitation in exiling pregnant Sītā to forest in order to show due or undue respect to public opinion. Rāma established a decorum and set an example for the future rulers of the world that the subjects have a better claim over the king than even his family members. That was the real democracy. It was for the people though not 'by the people' as Lincon said.

Secularity of Indian Rule—

Constitutionally India is a secular country. Fortunately most of us do not know the real meaning of the word secular. Secular is that which refuses the ideology of other world. Now the other world and its impact is so deeply imprinted on Indian mind that without other world there will be no India. So really speaking Indian soil can never accept secularism in its true sense. If Indian secularism means having no partiality for or bias against any religion, well, India had always been a secular country with the exception of Muslim rule for sometime.

India has always been a cradle for religious autonomy. There is no religion in the world nor has there been one, as tolerant as *Sanātana Dharma*. It was the irresistible influence of

Sanātana Dharma that freedom of worship and propagation of religion has been included in the fundamental rights. *Manusmṛti* is not a secular book but the entire Hindu Law even under British Rule, was based and is still so on *Manusmṛti* only. Why was it so ? Because no rule can defy the law of the soil. As a matter of truth *Sanātana Dharma* is nothing but the law of the Indian soil and as one jurist defined the law to be nothing but the common sense codified, it is impossible for any Government to ignore the common sense of the land. Hence the impact of *Sanātana Dharma* on Indian legal system whether civil, criminal or constitutional, is but natural.

Impeachment—

One of the important features of our constitution is impeaching the President in the parliament when it seems to be absolutely necessary. Certain process and procedure is prescribed for this impeachment. If the requisite majority is mustered, the President can even be terminated before the completion of his tenure. In India no impeachment procedure has so for taken place against any President even though there was a trial case against Mr. Justice Rāmaswāmī very recently, but in America President Nixon was pushed aside from his august presidential chair though he did try to defend himself to his utmost . Let us see if we can find any such case in Indian polity at any time.

As stated earlier, Indian trend was always in favour of monarchic rule because of her socio-political pattern and socio-philosophical thinking. In Indian *Varṇāśrama*-arrangement king was absolutely necessary because no society could function and discharge its social obligations unless it is well-protected from antisocial elements. *Brāhmaṇas,* though occupied highest position in the society, kept themselves always away from governing bodies and state affairs. They took it upon themselves to enhance the moral, cultural and spiritual standards of the country and the world at large. They seldom interfered in the administrative functioning but when they decided to raise their voice, it was always final. When opposed by *Brāhmaṇas,* the mightiest of the rulers went to the dust within no time though it was not a routine.

Here I would like to invite a reference to *Bhāgavata,* Skandha IV, chapter 14, *Śloka* 30—34. where king Vena was killed by the angry *Ṛṣis*. There was no war, no fighting, nothing of the sort. The *Ṛṣis* simply roared in the fury of their anger and *Vena* was gone. They said—

इति तेऽसत्कृतास्तेन द्विजाः पण्डितमानिना ।
भग्नायां भव्य याच्ञायां तस्मै विदुर चुक्रुधुः ॥
हन्यतां हन्यतामेष पापः प्रकृतिदारुणः ।
जीवञ्जगदसावाशु कुरुते भस्मसाद् ध्रुवम् ॥
नायमर्हत्यसद्वृत्तो नरदेववरासनम् ।
योऽधियज्ञपतिं विष्णुं विनिन्दत्यनपत्रपः ॥
को वैनं परिचक्षीत वेनमेकमृतेऽशुभम् ।
प्राप्त ईदृशमैश्वर्यं यदनुग्रहभाजनः ॥
इत्थं व्यवसिता हन्तुमृषयो रूढमन्यवः ।
निजघ्नुर्हुङ्कृतैर्वेनं हतमच्युतनिन्दया ॥

(IV. 14.30—34)

It was so simple. No lengthy impeachment, no termination, no dismissal but a shortest possible verdict and immediate implementation. Mark the words—

"Kill him, Kill him, He is a terrible and congenital sinner and does not deserve the sacred seat of a king." And how did they kill him ? No weapon; a simple though ferocious roar and the show was finished. It was this roar, of India—"त्रिंश कोटि कण्ठ कल कल निनाद कराले" which pushed the mighty British rule away from the country. So we see that there was provision in Indian system to get away with unwanted kings and this impeachment proviso is quite in accordance with *Sanātana Dharma.* The episode of *Vena* is also a fair example of emergency and exercising veto power.

To cut the story short, it will not be an exaggeration to say that there is nothing in the world and there can be nothing which is good for humanity at large and which may be beyond the realm of *Sanātana Dharma.* It may be the department of law or the department of physical science, one will find the answer to his puzzling question in *Sanātana Dharma.* Even the "Big Bang"

theory has already found accommodation in it long long ago.

Untouchability is a constitutional crime in our country. The social reformers like Śrī Dayānanda Sarasvatī, Rājā Rāmamohana Roy, Mahātmā Gāndhī and others, the constitution builders also may rightly claim to have abolished untouchability from the country. What is untouchability ? Is it purely a negative thing or does it contain any positive value also ? Is it possible to remove untouchability from every layer of society ? These and some more like these, are the 'questions which require some deep thinking, without any pride or prejudice.

It may be a meritorious act to nurse a stinking leper but will it be a cognizable offence not to touch him ? That is one standard of untouchability. Not very long ago when Princess of England married Armstrong, the photographer, every royal family of Europe boycotted it. What was it if not a sense of untouchability and in worse form for that ? Hindu ladies (I do not know what is in practice in other countries) when in their monthly period, do not touch food materials, water or materials for *Pūjā*. Are they untouchable ? Is it a crime not to touch them ? Let us suppose that there are two persons going to take food. One of them is a beef-eater and the other a staunch vegetarian ascetic. If the vegetarian fellow refuses to sit alongwith the beef-eater and take food, will he be guilty of a crime ?

If untouchability means entire negation of physical touching well, there is not at all any untouchability in the society as everybody touches everybody. Now let us come to the other aspect of it which perhaps our constitution-makers had in mind. It is regarding eating and drinking materials touched by so called untouchables and intercaste marriages. Let us here look into our past history that is the social aspect of *Sanātana Dharma*.

Marriages—

Intercaste marriages were not normal, ordinarily marriages (endogamy) were permitted only in equal ranks but the rules were not very rigid. Satyavatī according to *Mahābhārata*, was a Niṣāda girl. She gave birth to Vyāsa from Parāśara and Vyāsa was a *Brāhmaṇa*. Then Śāntanu, the king of Hastināpura, married her.

He produced two sons from her—Citrāṅgada and Vicitravīrya. These two were *Kṣatriyas.* Only this single example is sufficient to show what is what. Niṣāda caste was supposed to be untouchable even in those days. Every *Smṛti* talks of *Pratiloma, Anuloma* and other types of intercaste marriages. Among the *Purāṇas* we may find a number of cases where *Kṣatriyas* married *Brāhmaṇa* girls and so on. Under such circumstances will it be possible to maintain any standard of restriction for a married couple in dining together. Is there any mention in *Mahābhārata* that Śāntanu was socially boycotted by other *Kṣatriya kings ?* If not, then is it not established that whatever our constitution has provided, is not something new and against the *Sanātana Dharma ?* Let us now discuss some pros and cons of this fundamental correction regarding untouchability. Suppose some so-called untouchable gives a feast. It is not necessary and not possible for all to attend the function. What will be the legal position of the absentees ? Will they be taken to be guilty of a cognizable offence ? If among the absentees one happens to be a person of the *Savarṇa* community and the other from the untouchables, what will be the standard of law ? Will both be tried under the same act or will the standard differ ? The foremost question is if a person can be forced to do something against his will. Will it be legal and constitutional ?

As it is said that *Sanātana Dharma* is the code of law and social conduct, having its roots deep into the soil of the country, no law or constitution can go against it. Therefore if we start examining thoroughly our constitution, we will find that every clause has had somehow a connection with and has drawn inspiration from *Sanātana Dharma.*

Bestowing gifts on deserving persons, fixing one's thoughts in Śrī Kṛṣṇa (God), adoration of one's parents, piety, offering a portion of the daily meal to all creatures and giving a morsel of food to a cow—these are the six characteristics of *Dharma.*

Varṇa Vyavasthā in Sanātana Dharma

—*Vishnupriyan*

Sanātana Dharma connotes Eternal Religion and is firmly founded on *Śruti* (that which is heard) commonly called *Vedas*. *Manusmṛti* proclaims aloud—

वेदोऽखिलो धर्ममूलं स्मृतिशीले च तद्विदाम्।
आचारश्चैव साधूनामात्मनस्तुष्टिरेव च ॥

(II.6)

"The whole of the *Veda* is the source of *Dharma*, also the *Smṛti* (that which is remembered) and the character of those that know the *Veda*; further the conduct of the good and the satisfaction of the Self." What is the distinguishing feature of *Dharma ? Mahābhārata Anuśāsana Parva* elaborates—

आचारलक्षणो धर्मः सन्तस्त्वाचारलक्षणाः ।
आगमानां हि सर्वेषामाचारः श्रेष्ठ उच्यते ॥
आचारप्रभवो धर्मो धर्मादायुर्विवर्धते ।
आचाराल्लभते ह्यायुराचाराल्लभते श्रियम् ॥

"The mark of *Dharma* is *Ācāra* (good conduct). *Ācāra* is the mark of the good. Higher than all teachings is *Ācāra*. From *Ācāra* is *Dharma* born and *Dharma* enhances life. By *Ācāra* man attains life and wealth." *Manusmṛti* declares forcefully—

आचारः परमो धर्मः श्रुत्युक्तः स्मार्त एव च।

(I. 108)

"*Ācāra* is the highest *Dharma* declared by the *Śruti* and *Smṛti*." Elsewhere in the *Karṇa Parva* and *Śānti Parva* of *Mahābhārata*, it is explained that for the welfare of all beings was *Dharma*. It is called *Dharma* because it supporteth and holdeth together. *Dharma* based on eternal *Vedas*, naturally, has been called *Sanātana Dharma* or eternal pathway of righteous conduct.

A unique and currently controversial provision of this *Sanātana Dharma* is the *Varṇāśrama* arrangement which, according to the centenarian Kāñcī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha senior *Ācārya* is the stable sociological foundation for society. The authenticity for such a sanction originates from *Śruti*—the accepted bedrock of *Sanātana Dharma* itself. *Ṛgveda* states—

ब्राह्मणोऽस्य मुखमासीद्बाहू राजन्यः कृतः ।
ऊरू तदस्य यद्वैश्यः पद्भ्यां शूद्रो अजायत ॥

(X. 90. 12)

"The *Brāhmaṇa* from his face, from his arms arose *Kṣatriyas*, from his thighs came the *Vaiśyas* and the *Śūdras* were born from his feet." Further Lord Kṛṣṇa, in *Bhagavadgītā* emphatically states—

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः ।
तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्ध्यकर्तारमव्ययम् ॥

(IV. 13)

"The fourfold *Varṇa* was created by Me by the different distribution of *Guṇa* and *Karma*." *Manusmṛti* (I. 87—91) states—"He, the resplendent, for the sake of protecting all his creation assigned separate *Karmas* to those born of His mouth, arms, thighs and feet. Teaching and studying the *Veda*, sacrificing and guiding others in offering sacrifices, gifts and receiving of gifts, these He assigned to the *Brāhmaṇas*. The protection of people, gifts, sacrificing, study of *Vedas*, non attachment to the object of senses, these He prescribed to the *Kṣatriyas*. The protection of cattle, gifts, sacrificing and study of the *Vedas*, commerce, banking and agriculture to the *Vaiśyas*. The Lord commanded one *Karma* only for the *Śudras*, to serve ungrudgingly these other castes."

It is the origin of *Varṇas* and distribution of their duties by divinity that has come for sharp criticism and radical reforms politically, in our country today. *Āśrama Dharma* (also propagated vide *Manusmṛti* (VI. 87) constituting the four *Āśramas* viz., *Brahmacārī*, householder, *Vānaprastha* and *Saṁnyāsī* does not attract such criticism or call for urgent reforms ! Obviously, *Varṇa Dharma* smacks of a prenatal cause for a birth in a priveleged or underpriveleged environment, which cannot be

digested readily today. To quote Annie Besant, in the book *Sanātana Dharma* (The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, 1980 edition)—"In the long pilgrimage of the *Jīvātmā* through myriads of births, there are four distinctly marked stages called *Varṇas*—meaning normally colours and recognised in the social polity laid down by *Manu* as distinct social classes or castes". These stages are universal, all *Jīvātmās* passing through them. The peculiarity of the *Sanātana Dharma* is that it has made these four stages the framework of its social polity".. Annie Besant goes on, "In the early days, the outward caste (based on birth) coincided" with the defined stage. *Jīvātmās* at each stage were born into bodies belonging to that stage and the "whole of society was therefore contented and progressive." In later days, due to *Varṇasaṅkara* on a large scale disharmony resulting in disorder and stagnation surfaced. When *Jīvātmās* born in higher *Varṇas* fail to discharge their assigned higher duties, they cause much harm to society. It is precisely this very conclusion, that the Kāñcī Kāmakoṭi *Paramācārya* spelt out independently in his discourses as brought out in the book, *Voice of Divinity* by R. Gaṇapati.

Stressing the basic fact, the *Paramācārya* emphasises that there is no one big or small according to caste or *Varṇa*. Pointing out the unprecedented excellences of art, sculpture, music, literature, astrology, mathematics, medicine etc., of India till recently, the *Paramācārya* pinpoints the cause for this excellence to a stable society with the bedrock of *Varṇāśrama Dharma*. He also strongly rebuts the contention of the so-called reformers that the majority was kept in subjugation, by highlighting the absence of revolutions (of the nature of French, American or Russian revolutions) in our land ! Pointedly answering two questions viz., (1) Why should *Varṇa Dharma* remain and (2)Why only in India, he stresses that (A)for *Ātma-cintana* and *Anubhūti* of divinity as also for fine arts and noble conduct, a conducive culture must exist and (B) if it is in India, the world will have a model atleast ! Tracing the cause for this social decadence in this generation, he has squarely held the *Brāhmaṇa* who has failed to discharge

his *Svadharma* of *Vedādhyayana* and *Karmānuṣṭhāna*. Abandoning the heritage of sages inherited rightly till his father's time, he has taken to 'aping the west' in education, profession and even conduct ! In earlier times, the *Brāhmaṇa* was the role model for other *Varṇas* because of his austere living and noble conduct. Annie Besant put it crisply, when she said—"The *Śūdra Jīvātmā* in the *Brāhmaṇa* body is the greatest danger to *Sanātana Dharma* !" *Mahābhārata, Vana Parva says—*

न योनिर्नापि संस्कारो न श्रुतं न च सन्ततिः ।
कारणानि द्विजत्वस्य वृत्तमेव तु कारणम् ॥

"Not birth, nor *Saṁskāras* nor study of the *Vedas* nor ancestry are the cause of being twice born. Conduct alone is verily the cause thereof." Castigating the *Brāhmaṇa* devoid of righteous ways, *Vasiṣṭhasmṛti* admonishes—

आचारहीनस्य तु ब्राह्मणस्य वेदाः षडङ्गास्त्वखिलाः सयज्ञाः ।
कां प्रीतिमुत्पादयितुं समर्था अन्धस्य दारा इव दर्शनीयाः ॥

(VI. 4)

"To the *Brāhmaṇa* that is void of righteous ways, the *Vedas* even in their entirety and with all *Aṅgas* and all sacrifices too can bring no more joy as a wife lovely to see, cannot bring pleasure to a blind husband".

Excuses given by *Brāhmaṇas* on force of circumstances, compelling them to abandon their learning *Vedas*, has not been acceptable to *Kāñcī Paramācārya*, who reminds this community that the *Brāhmaṇa's* body is not for *Bhoga* and strongly urges them to ensure performance of *Upanayana* for their boys by eight years (age) and make them read *Vedas* atleast for one hour in the evenings for ten years to ensure availability atleast of priests for rituals in days to come !

Four is a significant number for the number of *Varṇas*, number of *Āśramas*, number of *Vedas*, number of states (such as waking, dreaming, deep sleep and the fourth *Turīya)*, number of *Yogas (Karma, Bhakti, Rāja* and *Jñāna)* number of stages of human life (infancy, youth, middle age and old age). It is noteworthy that all the foursome stages, are pointers towards evolution of the *Jīva*.

The aberrations of the existing *Varṇāśrama* needs corrective therapy and not outright dismantlement, as zealous political reformers would make us believe. Remedy for headache, surely can't be decapitation ! Unity in diversity—the ultimate Vedantic outlook—so permeates our *Sanātana Dharma,* that our *Varṇāśrama Dharma* also stood solidly in the face of severe onslaughts thus far. *Kāñcī Paramācārya* gives the example of tying a bundle of twigs to a manageable headload without dislocation. It is useless to put all twigs and tie the whole lot, as it is likely to loosen with least disturbance ! Instead, if smaller manageable lots of twigs are first tied together and a number of such manageable bunches are made and then these bunches are tied together yet again, the whole lot will be firm and secure. Even if a bunch in the lot of bunches only gets disturbed for any reason, the rest will not be affected. This principle is used to manage a large community by subdividing it into four *Varṇas,* with local autonomy for managing its law and order problems etc. Each such Varṇa till last generation or so had pride and satisfaction of its own. Crime rate was also less and division of labour based on hereditary works was satisfactory. Today's advancement has fanned inordinate desires alround, resulting in alround dissatisfaction and this is being stepped up in the name of rapid growth ! *Sanātana Dharma* did not advocate uniformity of all but highlighted unity of all. Systems that preached equality/uniformity disappear right before us—communism, for example. Swāmī Vivekānanda, as only he can put it this way—"Sects must, as a matter of course, exist but what need not exist, is sectarian quarrel.........The world would not be the better for sectarianism but the world cannot move on without having sects. One set of men cannot do everything. The almost infinite mass of energy in the world cannot be managed by a small number of people. Here at once we see the necessity that forced the division of labour upon us the division into sects.........Our most ancient books declare that the differentiation is only apparent and there is a thread of harmony, that beautiful unity running through all (diversity)." Presently, we seem to lose this universal vision, which is the cause for sectarian strife. Demolishing yet another

notion of superiority-inferiority on sectarian grounds, Swāmī Vivekānanda reminds us—

श्रद्दधानः शुभां विद्यामाददीतावरादपि ।
अन्त्यादपि परं धर्मं स्त्रीरत्नं दुष्कुलादपि ॥

(*Manu* II. 238)

"One should attempt to get *Parā Vidyā* from a low person also, learn supreme knowledge even from a *Cāṇḍāla,* marry with a gem like girl though she may be of an inferior descent."

When it comes to acquiring the ultimate knowledge, these transsectarian transactions were advocated, but not for petty considerations of passion (for acquiring a woman) etc. Young Indians tear such references out of context, to justify acts such as one *Varṇa* taking the profession of other *Varṇas* in these days, as if these are steps to ultimate knowledge ! Viewed without rancour or prejudice, the concept of *Varṇa Dharma* with divine sanction exemplifies the pronouncement 'सूत्रे मणिगणा इव' (variety of beads strung by a thread) of Lord Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavadgītā,* beautifully.

Ethics or Moral Science treats of *Sadācāra* or right conduct. The way in which rational beings should behave towards one another as well as towards other creatures is dealt with in the science of morals or ethics. Lord Manu says in his *Smṛti—Ācāra* (good conduct) is the highest *Dharma* declared by the *Śruti* and the *Smṛti.* Therefore, let the twiceborn that knoweth the self ever diligently practise it. Thus beholding the path of *Dharma* issue from *Ācāra,* the sages embrace *Ācāra* as the root of all *Tapas;* (austerity).

Righteousness and truth, good deeds, power and prosperity, all originate from conduct. You will find in the *Mahābhārata*—"The mark of *Dharma* is *Ācāra* (good conduct). Higher than all teachings is *Ācāra.* From *Ācāra, Dharma* is born, and *Dhama* makes for longevity. By *Ācāra* man attains life; by *Ācāra* he attains prosperity, by *Ācāra* he attains fair fame, here and hereafter. He who is the friend of all beings, he who is intent on the welfare of all in thought, word and deed—he only knoweth *Dharma,* O Jājali !"

—*Swami Sivananda Sarasvati*

Śākta Sampradāya—A Branch of Sanātana Dharma

—Prof. Sanjaya Mahapatra

As absolute, *Brahma* alone is true; as relative truth, all the different sects, standing upon different manifestations of the same *Brahma,* either in India or elsewhere, are true. Only some are higher than others. Suppose a man starts straight towards the sun. At every step of his journey, he will see newer and newer visions of the sun, the size, the view and light will every moment be new until he reaches the real sun. He saw the sun at first like a big ball, and then it began to increase in size. The sun was never small like the ball he saw; nor was it ever like all the succession of suns he saw in his journey. Still, is it not true that our traveller always saw the sun, and nothing but the sun ? Similarly, all these various sects such as *Vaidika, Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Saura* and *Śākta* are true—some nearer, some farther off from the real sun--which is our "One without a second". Taking the aforesaid illustration into account, it can be stated that the *Śākta Sampradāya* (worship of *Śakti)* is no doubt a branch of *Sanātana Dharma.*

Śakti cult has been called the essence of the *Vedānta* and the *Tantra* cult. This may give rise to confusion in the minds of scholars. The *Vedānta* philosophy of Śaṅkara and his followers advocates *Vivartavāda.* Thịs means in brief that the universe as seen manifested is nothing but phenomena. There is nothing real in it. The Absolute *Brahma* is the only reality. In support they quote "*brahma satyaṁ jaganmithyā*" meaning *Brahma* alone is true and *Jagat* i.e., the fleeting show of the universe is false. The *Tantra* philosophy advocates *Sadṛśa Pariṇāmavāda.* This in brief is that *Brahma* evolved himself in manifold manifestations and as such anything manifested is nothing but *Brahma.* In support they quote '*sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ brahma*' meaning everything is verily *Brahma.* These two views and two statements of *Śrutis* may appear to be contradictory. But the *Śakti* cult finds no contradiction or controversy here. The *Śakti* cult says that

Brahma himself evolved in manifold manifestations and as such each manifestation is *Brahma*. But people find them as *Jagat* i.e., fleeting like a cinema show out of their limited and imperfect power of comprehension due to the intricacy of the basic evolution which is false.

Śakti or mother nature being the cradle of the phenomenal existence of beings, her august personality and prowess require to be studied first. She is the immediate cause of the perceptible world. The experiences of beings are all in her domain. To know her entirety is the means to know the reality.

The pioneers of the *Śakti* cult have not, however, lost sight of the most important feature of the central doctrine of the *Upaniṣads* the impersonal quality less absolute. Infinite, the plenum of being, consciousness, bliss *(Saccidānanda Brahma)* is the only one ultimate reality. The average human being finds it, and very naturally too, difficult to understand and appreciate the deeper significance of this transcendent concept of the impersonal absolute. People endowed with limited intelligence stuff can at best conceive of a personal deity which serves as the object of their worship. So, in the hands of the *Śākta* theists the Impersonal Absolute of the *Upaniṣads* has in course of time come to be invested with a distinct personality. To be a little more precise, the oldest thinkers of the *Śākta* school were not content with this investiture of personal element on the supreme divinity. Rather, they preferred to affiliate the same to cosmic energy *(Śakti)*; but, at the same time they were careful enough not to confuse its identity with any form of material energy.

In the introduction to his commentary, *Guptavatī*, on the *Saptaśatī (Caṇḍī)*, Bhāskara Rāya, the eminent Bengālī *Tāntrika* teacher, quotes from the *Ratnatrayaparīkṣā* of Appaya Dīkṣita, to elucidate the *Śakti* position. There it is stated that the supreme spirit—eternal, flawless and unique due to its association with the

*Bhāskara Rāya Dīkṣita was not a Baṅgālī but an inhabitant of Karnataka Pradesh. It is said in the introduction of *Saubhāgya Bhāskara Bhāṣya* that 'श्रीमद्भास्करराय भारती दीक्षित चरणास्तावत् दक्षिणप्रान्तीय बीजापुरनिकटवर्तिकर्नाटकदेशाभिजना आसन्।'

—*Editor*

beginningless cosmic illusory principle *(Māyā)*, appears to divide itself into two apparently distinct elements (1)The quality *(Dharma)* and (2)The qualified *(Dharmī)*. The two again, the quality and the qualified are essentially non-different from each other, and in the state of Absolute equilibrium, the two entities do not appear as two discrete identities, but close together and shine forth as the one individual principle, the supreme being. The quality is nothing but the knowledge of different objects or the energy required for the performance of different actions. It goes by the name of *Śakti* or *Bhavānī*. The qualified, on the other hand, as the locus of the quality, is the agent of five-fold evolution—(1) Creation (2) Preservation (3) Disappearance (4)Dissolution and (5)Bestowal of favour. It goes by the name of *Parama Śiva* or *Mahā Viṣṇu*.

The quality-cum-qualified aspect of the absolute principle is thus very little removed from the Vedantic concept of personal Godhead *(Saguṇa Īśvara)*. The *Śāktas* have, however earned the eternal gratitude of all spiritual aspirants by endowing this immanent aspect of the transcendent Absolute with the characteristic of a divine female and accordingly *Śakti* has been acclaimed as the universal mother. It is needless to point out metaphysically analysed this immanent *(Saguṇa)* aspect can hardly be described as either male or female, as the *Aupaniṣadika* seer graphically puts it—"*na strī tvaṁ na pumānasi*""thou art indeed neither a male nor a female in reality."

Thus the *Śākta Sampradāya* is an indispensable organ of the *Sanātana Dharma* as it lays emphasis on the unchangeable divine entity which is imperishable and eternal for all times to come.

Sleep on your side, especially on the left side. This helps to empty the stomach. keep the same time daily for sleep. Wear loose clothing. Do not cover yourself with heavy blankets or clothing.

Sleep with your head towards the east. Do not sleep with your head towards the north. You can sleep with your head towards the west or south.

—*Swami Sivananda*

Dharma in Śrīmad Rāmāyaṇa

—*R. Kannan*

Śrīmān Nārāyaṇa descends to this mortal world to uphold the *Dharma* as and when there is a decay in *Dharma* and the rise of *Adharma*.

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥
परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥

(*Gītā* IV. 7-8)

He took the form of Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa; born to human couples; lived like human beings and followed the human *Dharmas,* so that people could follow His path.

Śrī Rāma was acclaimed as the personification of *Dharma* 'रामो विग्रहवान् धर्मः'.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa was landed as *Sanātana Dharma* 'कृष्णं धर्मं सनातनम्'.

In *Śrīmad Rāmāyaṇa,* Śrī Rāma exhibits various *Dharmas* at different places.

In the first canto itself, sage Nārada introduces Śrī Rāma as the best of human beings, knowing all *Dharmas* (धर्मज्ञः) and a protector of his own *Dharma.*

Tārā, wife of Vālī, even at the time of highest grief, seeing Śrī Rāma, Who had just killed her husband, praises Śrī Rāma as a *Uttama Dhārmika,* the best among the follower of *Dharma.*

त्वमप्रमेयश्च दुरासदश्च जितेन्द्रियश्चोत्तमधर्मकश्च ।
अक्षीणकीर्तिश्च विचक्षणश्च क्षितिक्षमावान् क्षतजोपमाक्षः ॥

(*Vālmīkīya Rāmāyaṇa* IV. 24. 31)

Śrī Lakṣmaṇa engaged in a long drawn battle with Indrajit at

Nikumbhilā, shoots an arrow, praising the *Dharma* of Śrī Rāma, which kills Indrajit instantly.

धर्मात्मा सत्यसन्धश्च रामो दाशरथिर्यदि ।
पौरुषे चाप्रतिद्वन्द्वस्तदैनं जहि रावणिम् ॥

(*Vālmīkīya Rāmāyaṇa* VI. 90. 69)

Here again Śrī Rāma's *Dharma* has been exalted to the highest degree.

Śrī Rāma, though, exhibited his greatness in following numerous human *Dharmas*, a couple of *Dharmas* are enunciated here. 1. पितृवाक्यपरिपालनम्—Fulfilling the orders of father in true spirit and soul. Śrī Rāma was offered the crown the previous day, by his father, the king Daśaratha, in front of the public. The very next day, he was ordered to go to forest and lead an ascetic life by the same Daśaratha, in order to fulfil the wishes of his wife Kaikeyī. Śrī Rāma accepted the same with grace, without a murmur and proceeded to forest with his young wife Sītā Devī and brother Lakṣmaṇa to lead an ascetic life. What a transformation of events ? The Lord who was born to a great king that too after a long period of *Gṛhastha's Putrakāmeṣṭi Yajña* and destined to lead a princely life, sacrificed his right to the throne, being the eldest son of the king, in order to obey the instructions of a beloved father. Sage Vālmīki compares the face of Śrī Rāma to that of a newly blossomed lotus, when he accepted the orders of His father to go to forest, exhibiting the *Dharma* of 'पितृवाक्यपालनम्'. But still, he goes one step to show 'पितृवाक्यपरिपालनम्' by the following incident.

Śrī Bharata went to Chitrakuta where Śrī Rāma, Sītā Devī and Lakṣmaṇa were staying. Along with him his mothers, ministers and subjects also walked. All of them beg Śrī Rāma to return to the kingdom. Śrī Bharata surrendered the kingdom to Śrī Rāma, procured by his mother Kaikeyī he performed 'शरणागति' at the feet of Śrī Rāma and requested him to return to the kingdom. Śrī Rāma could have returned to the kingdom and no one would have found fault with him as he had already performed the

'पितृवाक्यपालनम्' by proceeding to the forest and that the kingdom had been made over to him by the present owner Śrī Bharata. But Śrī Rāma, earnestly, refused to return to the kingdom in order to follow the instructions of his father to live in the forest for the full 14 years, in spirit and soul. But at the same time he presented his *Pādukās* to Bharata, as a token of himself which had more value than himself, with which Bharata later ruled Ayodhya for 14 years till Śrī Rāma returned from his *Vanavāsa*. Pleasing Bharata with his *Pādukās* and at the same time, following (obeying) the orders of his father Daśaratha, Śrī Rāma exhibited the important *Dharma* of 'पितृवाक्य परिपालनम्'.

Now we see another important *Dharma* practised by Śrī Rāma viz., 2.शरणागतरक्षणम्—The highest *Dharma* exhibited by Lord Śrī Rāma was the protection given to those who surrendered themselves at his feet. He gave refuge to Kākāsura, Vibhīṣaṇa, Samudra Rāja, and others. Here we will go through the Vibhīṣaṇa's 'शरणागति'.

Vibhīṣaṇa advised Rāvaṇa to return Sītā Devī to Śrī Rāma so that he could save himself and Lanka. But Rāvaṇa refused to listen to his advice. He started to abuse and scold Vibhīṣaṇa in public. Unable to abet *Adharma*, Vibhīṣaṇa leaving his friends, relatives and kingdom, came to the place where Śrī Rāma was camping, with four of his trusted ministers, and begged his refuge with pure heart.

The *Vānara* chieftains including the king Sugrīva (except Hanumānjī) advised Śrī Rāma not to accept Vibhīṣaṇa stating that Vibhīṣana is the brother of Rāvaṇa—the enemy that he had forsaken his own brother at the time of need, and that he had come to create confusion between Śrī Rāma and Vānaras, and in fact, he should be punished. However, Hanumānjī advised Śrī Rāma to accept Vibhīṣaṇa as he was a good person.

At this stage Śrī Rāma explained to the *Vānaras* the importance of protecting those who come for refuge by citing the story of dove (कपोतवृत्तान्तम्) which saved the hunter from hunger and cold

by sacrificing its own self. Then Śrī Rāma proclaims his *Parama Dharma* (परम धर्म) as follows—

सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्मीति च याचते ।
अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतद् व्रतं मम ॥

(*Vālmīkīya Rāmāyaṇa* VI. 18. 33)

"If anyone surrenders once, begging that he/she belongs to me, I shall expel fear from all beings. This is my steadfast vow."

There he goes one step further and tells Sugrīva

आनयैनं हरिश्रेष्ठ दत्तमस्याभयं मया ।
विभीषणो वा सुग्रीव यदि वा रावणः स्वयम् ॥

(*Vālmīkīya Rāmāyaṇa* VI. 18.34)

"O *Vānara* king Sugrīva ! The refuge has already been given by me. Go and bring Vibhīṣaṇa or even if Rāvaṇa himself has come in the guise of Vibhīṣaṇa."

Thus Śrī Rāma has exhibited the highest *Dharma* (परम धर्म) of 'शरणागतरक्षणम्'.

Though there are innumerable qualities and *Dharma* preached and practised by Lord Śrī Rāma, only a couple of them have been enlightened here.

May Lord Śrī Rāma and his consort Sītā Devī bless us all.

Nowadays many have recognised and realised the value of fasting. They resort to fasting whenever any form of ill-health manifests itself, and save doctor's bills. Fasting is nature's greatest curative agent. The fast gives an opportunity for nature to cleanse the system and remove the materials that clog certain organs or parts. It is a very efficacious therapeutic agent. Many kinds of poisonous materials and toxins are eliminated by fasting. In numberless cases it has restored health when everything else has failed. If you fast as soon as a disease is manifested it will soon disappear and many serious complications will be avoided. If you feel feverish, if you suffer from dyspepsia, fast for a day and you will be cured immediately. Nature is your reliable guide, doctor, friend and nurse. Seek her help always.

—*Swami Sivananda*

Sanātana Dharma—The Only Dharma of Totality

—*P. Ramachandracharya*

No religion can be called 'Total' unless it deals thoroughly with the following topics, whatever their doctrine about them be, they are—

(1) Concept of God.

(2) The universe—the pros and cons and its purpose.

(3) The individual soul.

(4) Relation between all these and the aim of all activity.

Let us see how our *Sanātana Dharma* is perfect and is unique in this respect, compared to other major religions of the world.

(1) Concept of God—

Is God necessary for religion ? Voltaire, a french philosopher of the eighteenth century says—"If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him." The idea is that God is a necessary assumption which may not be a fact. Burtrend Russel challenges this belief. He writes—"It is undesirable to believe a proposition when there is no ground whatsoever for supposing it". So he wants a rational and scientific ground. But Mahātmā Gāndhī snubs these arguments and declares;—"The existence of God is like a Geometrical axiom, it cannot be proved". To him God is a felt fact, not an intellectual guess work or a debatable topic. (Mr. G. F. Pen Anthony in his article *Christ and Monism* vide *Bhavan's Journal* (dated 22nd March 1970) writes—"The God of traditional proofs is not the God of religion. An ultimate absolute; a totally unlimited transcendent unity, being the ground and sustainer of all apprehensible beings is the final philosophical conviction. That transcendent something explains everything apprehensible, yet in its transcendence, it remains unapprehensible and unexplained; for it can have no prior to itself." It is evident

that he is greatly influenced by the Vedic literature to arrive at this conclusion. In the opinion of the great Atomic scientist Albert Einstiene, the perfect order in the universe even in its minute details makes him humble and gives him an idea of God. Now about the principal religions of world.

The Bahai Religion says—"The God is only one, who is supreme and eternal truth. He is the original source of (continuous) flow of good, love, kindness and justice. The entire creation has emerged from His divine will" (from a booklet issued by a Bahai centre at Bangalore).

The Zend Avestā the scripture of Persian religion tells about *Ahura Mazda* the sungod—the most brilliant. It is akin to the early Vedic literature sans *Upaniṣads*.

What about Christianity ? We do not find a compact definition of God at one place in the holy *Bible*. In revelation (1—8) it is said—"I am the A and Z, the beginning and end of all things" says God who is the Lord, "the all powerful one who is and was and is coming again." His love, grace and such other qualities are mentioned scattered throughout the holy scripture. All these are the kinetic expressions of the supreme. But what is the Nature, essence or stuff of the being itself ? The next lacks in this .

Now coming to Islam, the opening verse of Surah—I of the holy *Quoran* says—"Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, the beneficent and merciful, owner of the day of judgement". The idea is explained with illustration throughout the scripture. But here again it lacks to give an idea of the substance of the supreme.

Opinions about the existence is not common in Buddhism because of the absence of one Supreme Scripture. But mostly its concept of ultimate reality is Nihilism—

एवं शून्येषु धर्मेषु किं लब्धं कि हुतं भवेत् ।
सत्कृतः परिभूतो वा केन कः संभविष्यति ॥

"The character of all these things is nothingness, which is got and which is lost ? By whom and to whom is honour or dishonour ?

शून्यता वासनाभावात् हीयते भाववासना ।
किञ्चिन्नास्तीति चाभ्यासात् सापि पश्चात् प्रहीयते ॥

"Feeling of non-existence removes the effect of the existent feeling. Practice of this feeling of nothingness destroys the feeling of nothingness also." Some say that nothingness is an existence but how ? If 'it' exists, it cannot be nothing, if it is nothing it cannot exist.

Jainism—

It accepts the individual soul but not God in the general sense of the term. It is a kind of pluralistic realism except God. When the individual soul attains perfection, it becomes *Arhan* or *Siddha*. But the twenty-four *Tīrthaṅkaras* and particularly the first one Ādinātha (also called *Vṛṣabhadeva)* is extolled as if he is the supreme. There is a vast and voluminous Jain literature in Kannaḍa. One poet Ratnākara Varṇī in his work *Bharateśa Vaibhava* praises Ādinātha like this, "I surrender to Him who is supreme the most brilliant light, having the effulgence of crores of moons and suns and whose lotus feet are glowing with the gems of the crowns of gods". Some Jains claim that their religion has its roots in *Vedas (Ṛṣabha* is an *Avatāra* of Viṣṇu).

Coming to *Sanātana Dharma,* it is all embracing and all assimilating. There is wide scope for different or even contradicting opinions and interpretations. They indicate only a partial view of the "whole and immeasurable truth." The story of six blind-men and an elephant is famous in this regard—

(1) Cārvāka accepts nothing of extra sensory perception.

(2) A part of the Sāṅkhyas though accepting God declares that both matter and God are inter-dependent as blind and the lame.

(3) Some of the six *Darśanas* (doctrines) do not accept God imposed by any text or authority as proof.

(4) Then comes the *Vedānta* also termed *Sanātana Dharma.* It imbibes and co-ordinates all these multifarious opinions and yet declares—"The truth from where the speech gets deflected (without being able to describe in full) and the mind (intellect) returns failing to comprehend."

What a factual estimation of the supreme !

But yet it does not remain silent at this. It trumpets—

(1) That from which all beings emerged, in which all live and enter at the end.

(2) It is a glorious blend of truth, consciousness bliss and knowledge.

The *Brahma Sūtras* support this *"Om* that from which birth etc., (of the universe happen) 'ॐ जन्माद्यस्य यतः ॐ ॥' (I. 2. 1).

The *Vedas* try to explain, interpret and prove with various illustrations, with arguments and convincing logic, the nature of *Brahma* (God). The gist is this, it is truth, knowledge, immeasurable bliss, unfailing consciousness, omniscient, omnipotent, untainted by the qualities of nature even though it is in and through it. It is the nearest; the farthest, the tiniest and the biggest, having all limbs everywhere." So on and so forth *ad-infinitum.* So *Brahma* is that whom all the *Vedas* praise. 'सर्वे वेदा यत्पदमामनन्ति'.

The purport of *Brahma Sūtras* is to say that every Noun, Pronoun, Adjective or Verb that appears in the *Vedas* is applicable to the supreme, *om tattu samanvayāt om.*

The *Gītā* is never tired of its description. "I am the father, mother, supporter, most elderly, revered one; worthy of being known; the most holy, the single perfect word *Om,* the three *Vedas,* the goal, sustainer, master, the supreme witness; abode, resort, friend, origin, dissolution, foundation, the receptacle and the imperishable seed (cause of all with no cause for itself) *Gītā* (IX. 17—18). Where are time and space to contain all his glories ! He is the essence of all animate and inanimate creation.

The *Vedas* are believed to be *Apauruṣeya* (authorless). What does that mean ?

It means that *Vedas* are not books but knowledge of truth. It is relayed from one to another as a perennial flow (श्रुति) from ear to ear. It was with the truth itself which knew itself through itself. How can it have any beginning or end which are only products of time ? Time starts with the process of creation but the truth is beyond that. It spreads throughout the universe through the creator Himself in the form of revelation in every cycle of creation. No seer, no god, however great, can understand Him fully.

If the *Vedas* are the chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the

Brahma Sūtras and the *Gītā* form the 'Full Bench'. The *Purāṇas* are like advocates. In which other *Dharmas* do we get a combination of such co-ordinating scriptures ? All *Sanātanīs* accept this. But the modern *Brāhma Samājists, Ārya Samājists* do not see eye to eye in this. *Vedānta* gives room for all these side-tracts.

The Theory of Divine Incarnation is the unique proposition of *Sanātana Dharma.*

The Christians say that Jesus—resurrected on Easter Sunday i.e., on the third day of his crucifixion (Good Friday) and became visible to some of his disciples. There are some Christians who believe that the reincarnation of Jesus is near at hand. It is called the second coming, because the time is ripe. They say that He will appear after about 2000 years of his first appearance. But that is all and no more about it. It is not a theory as in *Sanātana Dharma* that God incarnates from age to age when the virtuous feel oppressed, to remove all bad elements and show the right path of *Dharma.*

Debates were held in this land in an educative manner to find the truth on the basis of commonly accepted sources of proof. Do we find this in the history of any other religion ?

The Universe—

Material Science finds it beyond its scope about the condition of universe before the creation or after the end of the total phenomenon.

The chief religions that originated outside India have an idea of creation which is most unscientific and illogical. God created the universe in four days ? First the earth and then the sun, moon, etc. ? Modern science snubs all these sayings.

But the seventeenth century poet Dryden in his verse, *Song for Saint Cecillas Day* written on the 22nd November 1687 writes,

From harmony, from heavenly harmony—
This universal frame began !
When nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,

The tuneful voice was heard from high.
"Arise ! Ye more than dead.
Then cold, hot, moist and dry
In order to their station leap".

His idea somewhat resembles the *Vedic* idea. Where did he get this idea ? Not in Bible of course ! What about the end of the universe ?

"The trumpet shall be heard on high
The dead shall live and living die
And music shall untune the sky."

But here he falls back upon the idea of Biblical "Last Day of Judgement". Anyhow it is divine music that starts and ends the concrete existence (only once).

The other religions that have their origin in India differ widely. There are naturalists and theists but yet we find no blind belief.

Then what about the *Vedic* verdict ? The gist of *Nāsadīya Sūkta* of *Ṛgveda* (X 129. 1—3) is this.

"Before creation there was neither existent (cognisable by senses), nor non-existent (Nihilistic) no earth, no sky, no anything beyond. Where did this fathomless uncomprehensible exist ? Only gloom was hidden in gloom, then there was no death, no immortality, no day, no night. But that one throbbed (breathed) in Itself". The nature in its original form existed pervaded by the all-engulfing one. It willed; Its rays spread and the creation began".

According to our *Śāstras* the end of the universe comes in the reverse way. All solids become liquids and they in turn become heat and light. (Light is also matter). Heat changes into gas and that becomes special non-concrete matter (nature abhors vacuum. The inter-stellar space is spread with thin cosmic dust). That dissolves into material (physical) awareness of the cosmos called ego or *Aham*. That merges into *Mahat* (primordial matter) and that plunges into *Prakṛti* or universal organic substance (black hole ?) and that into the supreme abode

न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः ।
यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥

(*Gītā* XV. 6)

"That abode which sun cannot illuminate; neither moon nor fire, that entering which there is no return, is my supreme abode."

(3) Soul—

1. The believers in the last day of judgement and 'eternal heaven' or 'hell' at the end of creation do not define soul. Only one birth for a soul ! It is eternal and no transmigration. Nihilists believe in extinction or nothingness which is unconceivable. Our *Śāstras* define the soul, by recognition. It is pure—(1) Existence (2) Consciousness (3) A throbbing will. *(Jñāna, Icchā, Kriyā)* *Gītā* approaches the topic thus—

(2) The soul is neither born nor dies (II. 20). Weapons cannot cut it, fire cannot burn it, water cannot drench it nor can wind dry it (II. 23).

It cannot be cut (by anyother means also i.e. by curse or pierced by any deadly rays like Laser), it cannot be made wet (by any solution, acid etc.), it cannot be dried by heat or sucking etc. It is eternal, stable (never changing) (II. 24). It is unmanifest, unthinkable (II. 25).

(3) Transmigration and rebirth are the most natural process of cause and effect. *Sanātanīs* are glad that their ancient theory is being proved by the most eminent scientists of parapsychology. Many cases of rebirth have come to the notice not only among *Sanātanīs* but also among all other religions including unbelievers.

Many other ancient people like Pythagoras, Plato, Leonardo Dovinci and scores of others believed this. Pythagoras believed that the soul can migrate even into the body of animals. But such beliefs were not backed by the theory of "as you sow, so you reap". Famous psychiatrist Dr. Elizabeth Ross tells—"The body when damaged beyond repair releases the real you." But what is released is not the real self according to *Vedānta*.

(4) Emancipation—

What is *Mukti* ? Extinction ? Becoming the Supreme ? Part of the Supreme ? Or the direct image of the Supreme without

a medium ? All these are logical when seen through an angular vision. But what about other religions ? Eternal heaven where we live with beautiful girls with palaces or mansions, surrounded by gardens where clear rivers flow or be thrown into the fire of hell never to rise again ?

The *Sanātana Dharma* tries to embrace any theory with due respect and consideration. It is All-engulfing. A Londoner who was a Roman Catholic said once— "I am a Hindu, but I can go to Church and pray God. I have freedom to accept Christ as my *Guru* and yet be a Hindu. Such is the universal nature of Hinduism. It assimilates every theory with a glow of its own. Which other religion can equal this ?

Hariḥ Om Tat Sat !

It is well-known that (in this *Kali* age) wise men worship through sacrifices mostly consisting of chanting the names of the Lord and singing His praises, the Lord who is of a dark colour, though bright by lustre, perfect in all limbs, adorned with ornaments, furnished with His weapons and waited upon by His attendants.

—*Bhāgavata* (XI. 5. 32)

The ideal of the Indian race is freedom of the soul. This world is nothing. It is a vision, a dream. This life is one of many millions like it. The whole of this nature is *Māyā,* is phantasm, a pest-house of phantasms. That is the philosophy. Babies smile at life and think it so beautiful and good, but in a few years they will have to revert to where they began. They began life crying, and they will leave it crying. Nations in the vigour of their youth think that they can do anything and everything—"We are the gods of the earth. We are the chosen people." They think that God almighty has given them a charter to rule over all the world, to advance His plans, to do anything they like, to turn the world upside down. They have a charter to rob, murder, kill; God has given them this, and they do that because they are only babes. So empire after empire has arisen—glorious, resplendent—now vanished away, gone, nobody knows where; it may have been stupendous in its ruin.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

Duties of a Preceptor and Disciple

A teacher should not refuse to teach when asked to do so. A teacher who becomes an outcaste has no tie with the student. His words will be law to the pupil unless they contravene *Dharma.* The pupil is bound to give up a teacher whose conduct is tainted as also one who neither studies the *Veda* himself nor teaches it. The teacher should assiduously fill the ears of the student with the *Veda (Manu.* II. 144). The teaching may include besides the *Veda* worldly matter as philosophy. His claim to the homage from the pupil lasts as long as instruction lasts.

Āpastamba thus describes the duties of the teacher. He should love the pupil like a son; he should be very attentive to the pupil's need, he should teach him all he can, of the sacred science without withholding any part of it, he should not employ the pupil in his own work when the distraction will prejudice the studies of the pupil. When he neglects these duties, he ceases to be a teacher *(Guru).*

A fundamental doctrine of Indian education is that knowledge should be imparted according to the fitness of the recipient which must be made out from his *Varṇa,* ancestry, nature and previous equipment. Knowledge is power and power should not be given to those who will not use it properly i.e., for the good of all. In such subjects as medicine or archery *(Dhanurveda)* a careful enquiry into the disposition and record of his would-be pupil is obligatory in the social interest. The rule of Viṣṇu that one should not sacrifice for or teach one who has not been examined and found to merit the help, is of wide applicability. One should not sow on unfertile soil *(Manu.* 123, 125). *Vidyā* is not the property of the teacher but a deposit held by him and it should be given only to its real owner. By giving it to an envious person

who does not follow the rules of studentship, its strength is lost *(Manu.* II. 115 B).

Harita's exhortation that learning should be imparted only to the pupil of zeal winds up with the warning not to teach the boastful, inwardly corrupt and those of evil disposition.

The teacher is entitled to punish the pupil for dereliction but not so as to hurt him. Only a rope or a light cane alone can be used to strike the fatty portions of his body like the buttocks. Flogging on other parts of the frame will entail punishment for assault.

When the youth has been invested with the thread of his caste, let him diligently prosecute the study of the *Vedas* in the house of his preceptor, with an attentive spirit, and leading a life of continence. He is to wait upon his *Guru,* assiduously observant of purificatory practices, and the *Veda* is to be acquired by him, while he is regular in the performance of religious rites. In the morning-*Sandhyā* he is first to salute the sun, in the evening fire, and then to address his preceptor with respect. He must stand when his master is standing; move when he is walking and sit beneath him when he is seated. He must never sit, nor walk, nor stand when his teacher does the reverse. Let him bathe in water which has first been used for his preceptor's ablutions, and every morning bring fuel and water, and whatsoever else may be required.

The word *Svādhyāya* is generally taken to mean the recitation of the particular branch of *Veda* taught in one's family; but it also includes the recitation of the divine name. The *Bṛhannāradīya Purāṇa* says that it is the name of the divine, the name and the name alone that can redeem us, in this age of *Kali.* There is no other way of escape, none and none, to be sure.

हरेर्नाम हरेर्नाम हरेर्नामैव केवलम् ।
कलौ नास्त्येव नास्त्येव नास्त्येव गतिरन्यथा ॥

Sanātana Hindu Dharma

(The Origin and Meaning of Hindu as given by Tantras)

—*Kiran Shankar Yogacharya*

What is 'H' plus 'Indu' equal to ?

1. Hindu, the Ancient Word—

In this ever-changing three dimensional world, some say that the term Hindu is the corrupted form of *Sindhu*. But according to Mr. Sāwarkar, the original name is the Hindu itself. It was only later that in *Saṁskṛta,* it came to be called *Sindhu* by the *Aryans*. Thus, according to him, the term Hindu antedates the Aryan or the Vedic period, and was known to the indigenous people of India.

2. Bārhaspatya's view—

Bārhaspatya states that the land of *Hindu* is between the Himalayas in the north and the *Indu-Sarovara* (Kanyā Kumārī) in the south. Thus, *Hi* from the Himalayas plus *Ndu* from the Indu lake makes *Hi-ndu* i. e., *Hindu.* This is, of course, the grossest interpretation. Besides, there are some other emotional interpretations which seem to try to separate humanity into pieces. Now we have to look for the internal and universal meaning of *Hindu* which is applicable always irrespective of time, place, person and situations.

3. 'Hin' Plus 'Du'—

(a) According to the *Pārijāta Haraṇa Nāṭaka*—"A *Hindu* is he who with his self-discipline, destroys *(Hinasati)* his physical and mental sins, and other destructive forces as well *(Duṣṭa)*. Thus, *Hin* from *Hinsati* plus *Du* from *Duṣṭa* makes *Hin-du*. Hence, anyone in the world, irrespective of caste and colour, nation and religion, sect and denomination, is a *Hin-du* who practises self-discipline *(Tapa)* to get rid of his physical and mental ills, and who can stand bravely to fight against the evils, the enemies of

humanity, such as hypocrisy, bigotry, narrowism, prejudices, superstitions, sectarianism, *Adharma,* and so on. This subtle meaning of *Hin-du* is broad and logical enough, and is according to the universal spirit of the real *Sanātana Dharma,* the Eternal Philosophy of mankind, away from any dogmatism and narrowism.

(b) Merutantra-Prakāśa (22) states—

hīnaṁ ca dūṣayatyeva sa hindurucyate priye ।

In this verse, *Hīnam* means mean-mindedness; and *Dūṣayati* stands for "He who destroys". Thus *Hin* from *Hīnam* and *Du* from *Dūṣayati,* when combined, gives rise to a term known as *Hindu* which represents the one who destroys the mean-mindedness, narrow-mindedness and all the destructive forces of the human mind, detrimental for the development of the individual, society, nation and the world at large.

Śabda-Kalpadruma, a *Saṁskṛta* dictionary, defines it similarly. Another *Saṁskṛta* dictionary known as *Adbhuta Kośa* states that he who controls the wicked is *Hindu.* According to *Rāma Kośa,* another *Saṁskṛta* dictionary, *Hindu* is the one who punishes the wicked, is against the immoral policy and follows the truth and righteousness known as *Sad-Dharma.* In short, *Hin-du* is the destroyer *(Hiṁsaka)* of the wicked *(Duṣṭa).*

(c) According to another Tāntrika literature—

hiṁsāṁ tu dūṣayatyeva sa vai hinduriti smṛtaḥ ।

According to this verse, the one who destroys *(Duṣayati)* the destructive agents *(Hiṁsām)* is called *Hin-du* who is, hence, always the votary of love, peace and compassion. This is in accordance with the sublime spirit of *Bhakti Mārga,* the path of love and devotion of *Sanātana Dharma,* the perennial philosophy of humanity at large. One Jaina saint says—"*Hiṁsayā Dūyate*" i.e., one who avoids violence is a *Hin-du.*

4. The threefold universal concept—

Thus, from the above-mentioned information available from various ancient literatures of *Sanātana Dharma,* it is crystal clear that anyone, whether oriental or occidental, white or black or brown, red or yellow, is really a *Hin-du* if and only if he or she—

(1) Practises self-discipline to destroy his or her physical and mental ills;

(2) does not know how to make any compromise with the evils or *Adharma* such as narrowness, bigotry, hypocrisy, exploitation and so on; and

(3) destroys the destructive agents and keeps himself or herself away from anti human elements and activities.

In other words, anyone in the world is a *Hindu* who is equipped with *Viveka,* the power of knowing what is right and what is wrong. This is the supreme faculty of wisdom, supra-mental instrumentation of *Dharma.*

5. 'H' Plus 'Indu'—

The universe is three-fold, physical, mental and supra-mental:, gross, subtle and causal. When grossly interpreted, the term *Hindu* was either corrupted from *Sindhu,* or anti-dated it and also was said to be *Hi* plus *Ndu* according to Bārhaspatya. In the subtle aspect, it is *Hiṁ+Du,* which is more logical with the universal outlook and application, already explained above in sections 3 and 4. Now *Hindu* is to be spiritually explained as *H+Indu.*

According to the science of *Saṁskṛta* grammar, with mathematical accuracy, a consonant can be expressed only when it is united with a vowel. Therefore, the consonant *H* when combined with the vowel *I* becomes manifested as *Hi.*

That is, *H* plus *Indu* is equal to *Hindu. H* and *Indu* are both *Saṁskṛta* words; and hence the compound word *Hindu* is also purely a *Saṁskṛta* word. No need to call it a corrupted form (derivative) of *Sindhu* ! Moreover, in the spiritual plane of existence, no corruption can exist ! Then, what is *H ?* And *Indu ? Śete sarvasmin iti śivaḥ* i.e., the underlying principle of all existence is termed as *Śiva,* the universal consciousness which is both immanent and transcendent. It is this *Śiva,* the unmanifest principle, the central nucleus of the whole existence, which is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent, and which is represented by the sound *H* without the vowel *A*. It is stated—

Śivavācī Hakārastu i. e., *H* stands for Śiva. It is *Puruṣa,* the inner consciousness, as presented by *Sāṅkhya* philosophy. *Indu* is

another word for *Candra* which stands for *Śakti* or *Māyā.* It is stated *'śaktirūpaḥ sthitaścandraḥ'* i. e., *Śakti,* the supreme operating power or matrix of the whole universe, has been symbolised by *Candra* or *Indu,* the moon. It is *Prakṛti* of *Sāṅkhya* philosophy, one of the six *Darśanas* of practical living philosophies of *Sanātana Dharma.*

Śiva is that eternal principle of existence *(Sat),* consciousness *(Cit)* and Bliss *(Ānanda)* which underlies the universe with its ever-changing phenomena. *Śakti* or *Prakṛti* is the creative power of this eternal principle. *H* plus *Indu* is Śiva plus *Śakti, Puruṣa* plus *Prakṛti,* male plus female, *Brahma* plus *Māyā, Buddha* plus *Tārā, Ja* plus *Hevah,* positive plus negative. Thus, *H+Indu* is spiritually the symbol of the oneness of Śiva and *Śakti,* the cognitive principle and its creative aspect. And the oneness of Śiva and *Śakti* is known as *Brahma* as stated in *Meru Tantra—"śiva śaktyātmakaṁ brahma."* Hence, *Hindu=(H+Indu)* is the synonym of *Para Brahma,* the cosmic consciousness. This ever-changing universe is the manifestation of this never-changing *Brahma,* the supreme bliss. Hence, the ancient literatures on *Tantra Yoga* speak of the universe as being pervaded by *Śiva-Śakti* force—*"śivaśaktyātmakaṁ jagat".* In other words, the universe consists of these two polarities, H positive *(Puruṣa* or Śiva) and *Indu* negative *(Prakṛti* or *Śakti),* and hence, it is the *H+Indu* i.e., bi-polar universe. *H* is the electric male and *Indu,* the Magnetic female. The union is *H+Indu* i.e., *Hindu,* the oneness of male and female, the electro-magnetic force that pervades the whole universe. That is why, *Tantras* state truthfully—*"strīpuruṣātmakaṁ jagat"* i e., the whole universe is bi-polar. This is what the term *Hindu* represents.

Again, every individual being is also the reflection of *Brahma,* the universal consciousness. Hence, everyone is spiritually the unit consciousness or unit Hindu. Thus, the individual, the universe and *Brahma,* the cosmic consciousness, are all *Śivaśaktyātmakam,* consisting of H and Indu, Śiva and Śakti, the cognitive principle and its creative-cum-operating power.

These two principles are not actually dual in the spiritual plane.

In this relative universe of three dimensions, everything is manifested into dual aspects, male and female, positive and negative. But in the fourth dimension of spiritual existence, they are one, the supreme consciousness. This is *Advaita*, the non-dual. This supreme oneness is what *H+Indu* represents. The goal of humanity is to realize this oneness or to attain *Turya*, the fourth state of super-consciousness known as *Brahma*, in which duality disappears into unity. The one who knows *Brahma* becomes one with *Brahma (brahmavid brahmaiva bhavati)*. And *Brahma* and *Hindu* are synonymous.

6. The H+Indu Formula—

Thus, the fourth dimensional (spiritual) approach leads this author to derive the following formula—

$$H+Indu=Hindu$$

where *H* represents Śiva, the supreme consciousness, *Indu* symbolises *Śakti*, the creative cosmic power, and *Hindu* represents *Brahma*, the supreme state of harmony and self-realization.

This author would like to state this mathematical representation in words proposed as follows—

अव्यक्तो हः शिवः प्रोक्त इन्दुः शक्तिरिहोच्यते ।
तयोरैक्यं परब्रह्म हिन्दुरित्यभिधीयते ॥

This verse states that *H* (ह्) is Śiva, the universal father, the supreme light, *Indu* (इन्दु) is *Śakti*, the cosmic creative energy, the universal mother; and that their oneness is *Hindu* (हिन्दु) that is *Para Brahma*, the supreme Godhead, the life eternal, the consciousness supreme, and the bliss divine.

This way we find that *Hindu* as a word, a principle and a *Dharma*, is *Sanātana* in its form, conception and nature. So there should remain no doubt that *Hindu Dharma* and *Sanātana Dharma* are synonymous.

Athāto Dharma Jijñāsā

—*Dr. Shiva Shankara Awasthi*

Though the above caption is an aphorism of *Pūrva Mīmāṁsā* philosophy, but here it is generalized. It is the time to know what *Dharma* means ? The term *Dharma* in one scripture is restricted to one particular sense only while in the other it has very wide significance and covers various aspects of meaning. To indicate the range of its meaning let us proceed to point out that while the *Dharma* on one hand signifies the nature of all the substantial forms (पदार्थ) of the world, it stands, on the other hand for the various duties, virtues, moral and religious merits, impressions on the mind by good deeds and purificatory rites etc.

Kaṇāda, the great oriental scientist asserts that now, 'I shall explain the term *Dharma*." "अथातो धर्मं व्याख्यास्यामः" (*Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* I, *Ahnika* 1). Afterwards he proclaims that from which the mundane prosperity and the final beatitude is accomplished is called *Dharma* "यतोऽभ्युदयनिःश्रेयससिद्धिः स धर्मः" (*Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* II. 2).

Here *Dharma* does not signify the virtuous conduct but the nature or character of the seven *Padārthas* (things) assigned by *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy.

Commenting upon the above cited *Sūtras,* Praśastapāda says—

प्रणम्य हेतुमीश्वरं मुनिं कणादमन्वतः ।
पदार्थधर्मसङ्ग्रहः प्रवक्ष्यते महोदयः ॥

Here *Padārthas* itself and its innate qualities are said as *Dharma.* By the way Kaṇāda also indicates the other meaning of 'धर्म' as a faculty of impression made on the heart by righteous deeds, in the following aphorisms—

"धर्म विशेषाच्च" (IV. 2. 7)
"धर्माच्च" (IX. 2. 9)
"आर्षं सिद्धदर्शनं च धर्मेभ्यः" (IX. 2. 13)

Yāska, one of the great *Nairuktas* goes to say—"साक्षात्कृतधर्माण ऋषयो बभूवुः", i. e., in ancient times, those persons, who have seen the

Dharma in their hearts are said as *Ṛṣis*. Here *Dharma* signifies the *Veda*, because it is said that 'मन्त्रद्रष्टारो ऋषयः'. In the commentary called Gopālikā by Ṛṣiputra Parameśvara on the *Sphoṭa Siddhi* of Maṇḍana Miśra, the commentator elucidates.

निरुक्तकारो हि वेदसम्प्रदायौपयिकतया वेदसाक्षात्कारे वक्तव्ये किं पुनर्न्यायेन वेदसाक्षात्करणमप्युक्तं भवतीति मन्यमानः तत्फलभूतधर्मसाक्षात्करणमेवाह- साक्षात्कृतधर्माण ऋषयो बभूवुरिति; न हि शब्दमन्तरेणार्थः कश्चन गृह्यते। अपि च श्रेयस्साधनं धर्मः तत्र मन्त्रोऽप्यन्तर्गत इति मन्त्रभागः साक्षात्कृतो धर्मतयैव।

Parameśvara, in this matter differs a bit with Maṇḍana Miśra while the author of *Sphoṭa Siddhi* goes to affirm that 'परमर्षयः साक्षात्कृतधर्माणोऽव्याहतान्तः प्रकाशाविधूतविपर्यासक्रमं च वाक्तत्त्वं प्रतिपेदिरे प्रतिपादयामासुरिति च प्रतिज्ञायते यथोक्तम्—साक्षात् कृतधर्माण ऋषयो बभूवुः'. i. e., *Paramarṣis* *, who possess unobstructed intution, realized the *Vāk Tattva* or *Dharma* which is free from contrariety and order made by divisions. Here *Vāktattva* stands for *Śabda Brahma* or *Praṇava* or *Veda* and ultimately *Dharma*. But Ṛṣiputra Parameśvara comments that the author of *Nirukta* ought to say that they have found out the *Veda* but he says *Dharma,* which is the result of the *Veda,* knowing that thus the *Veda* is also said. Because *Dharma* is meaning (अर्थ) and there is no meaning without word. *Dharma* is the means of bliss. It also covers the *Mantra* and *Brāhmaṇa etc.*

Medhātithi, the great commentator of *Manusmṛti,* too points out—

एतत्साक्षाद्धर्मस्य लक्षणं निमित्तं ज्ञापकम् न पुनः प्रत्यक्षम्।
यथा अन्यैरुक्तम् साक्षात्कृतधर्माण इति ॥

(II. 12)

Veda is the cause of *Dharma* and it is not perceptible as the others *(Nairuktas)* say—'साक्षात्कृतधर्माण इति'.

* There are three categories of *Ṛṣis*—one the *Paramarṣi* or *Maharṣi* the other *Śrutarṣi* and the third *Ṛṣi* as said in *Gopālikā Ṭīkā*—

प्रथमाः प्रतिभानेन द्वितीयास्तूपदेशतः।
अभ्यासेन तृतीयास्तु वेदार्थं प्रतिपेदिरे ॥

(Nirukta Vārtika by Gārgya Nīlakaṇṭha)

They were first, who saw the *Veda* or *Dharma* in their hearts with the help of *Pratibhā* (Intution), the others who got it through *Upadeśa* (communication) were—second and the third who practised and wrote it for the others.

Patañjali, one of the great grammarians, supports *Nirukta's* view quoting an *Āgama* in the Paśpaśāhnika of his *Mahābhāṣya*—

ब्राह्मणेन निष्कारणो धर्मः षडङ्गो वेदोऽध्येयो ज्ञेयश्च ।

"*Brāhmaṇas* must study the *Dharma* i.e., *Veda* with its six limbs, without having any perceivable result." Nāgeśa, the great later grammarian suggests that "धर्मत्वं च वेदस्य पुरुषप्रयत्नसाध्यतया धर्मत्वेनाभिमता-ध्ययनज्ञानकर्मत्वेनौपचारिकमित्याहुः" but it is not metonymical (औपचारिक). *Dharma, Veda, Praṇava* or *Śàbda Brahma* are synonyms. The great law-giver Manu proclaims—

वेदः स्मृतिः सदाचारः स्वस्य च प्रियमात्मनः ।
एतच्चतुर्विधं प्राहुः साक्षाद्धर्मस्य लक्षणम् ॥

(II.12)

"*Veda, Smṛti* and the way of living of ideal men, also the liking of one's own self (self-satisfaction), these four, it is said, constitute the *Dharma.*"

Bhartṛhari says—

प्रणवो हि वेदः । स हि सर्वशब्दार्थप्रकृतिः ।

(Vākyapadīya Vṛtti)

"*Praṇava* or *Om* is the *Veda* and that is the root cause of all the words as well as meanings."

Dharma is not only the *Veda* but it is Paramātmā too *Īśāvāṣyopaniṣad* observes—

हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम् ।
तत्त्वं पूषन्नपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ॥

(Śukla Yajurveda Kāṇva Saṁhitā)

"The entrance of truth is covered with golden vessel; O Pūṣan, kindly open it, so that we can see the ultimate truth as *Dharma.*"

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa also maintains—

यो वै स धर्मः सत्यं वै ।

(14. 8. 4. 2. 26)

Dharma is reckoned among the names of Lord Viṣṇu—

वीरः शक्तिमतां श्रेष्ठो धर्मो धर्मविदुत्तमः ।

(Viṣṇu Sahasranāma 56)

Hear Śaṅkarācārya interprets the term like this—

सर्वभूतानां धारणाद्धर्मः धर्मैराराध्यत इति वा धर्मः ।

In support of his statement he quotes the following *Śruti*—

देवैरत्रापि विचिकित्सितं पुरा
न हि सुज्ञेयमणुरेष धर्मः ।

(*Kaṭhopaniṣad* I. 1)

"Even the *Devas* had doubtful discussions in yore about it because this subtle *Dharma* or *Ātmā* is not to be known easily." *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki also seconds this view.

Brahmā glorifies Rāma—

अक्षरं ब्रह्म सत्यं च मध्ये चान्ते च राघव ।
लोकानां त्वं परो धर्मो विष्वक्सेनश्चतुर्भुजः ॥

(VI. 117. 14)

"O Rāghava, Rāma, you are *Akṣara Brahma,* the imperishable supreme being or *Śabda Brahma,* in the beginning of creation, in the middle and at the end you remain as an ultimate truth. You are the final *Dharma* of the world. You are Lord Viṣṇu having four arms."

According to the above discussion we have seen that the word *Dharma* signifies the *Veda* and God as well.

Patañjali, wrote *Yogasūtras* and expanded the theory of *Yoga,* established by Hiraṇyagarbha. He says in his *Sūtra* of *Yoga* philosophy—

शान्तोदिताव्यपदेश्यधर्मानुपाती धर्मी ।

(III. 14)

"A thing gross or subtle like earth, water etc., and *Citta etc.,* having *Śānta* (after performing an action, which became inert), Udita (active) and *Avyapadeśya* (not to be hinted) *Dharmas* (capabilities) is called *Dharmī.*" In the *Vyāsa Bhāṣya* of above *Sūtra* it is said—

'योग्यतावच्छिन्ना धर्मिणः शक्तिरेव धर्मः ।'

'य एतेषु अभिव्यक्तानभिव्यक्तेषु धर्मेष्वनुपाती सामान्यविशेषात्मा सोऽन्वयी धर्मी ।'

"A power, related to inner properties of a thing (धर्मी) is called *Dharma.*" Vācaspati Miśra explains it in two ways. First—

धर्मिणो द्रव्यस्य मृदादेः शक्तिरेव चूर्णपिण्डघटादिशक्तिरेव धर्मः। यासौ घटादीनामुत्पत्तिशक्तिः सोदकाहरणादि योग्यतावच्छिन्ना।

In another way he divides the sentence—

? अथवा के धर्मिणः ? इत्यत्रोत्तरम् योग्यतावच्छिन्नाः धर्मिण इति। को धर्मः ? इत्यत्रोत्तरं—शक्तिरेव धर्मः। तेषां योग्यतैव धर्म इति।

Question—"What are *Dharmīs*" ?

Answer—"Those things which possess a particular capacity, faculty or power are called *Dharmīs*. And what is *Dharma ?* That is ability." The main doctrine of *Yoga* philosophy is "सर्वं सर्वात्मकम्" *(Yogasūtra Bhāṣya* III. 14).

All the *Jātis* (classes) like *Jalatva, Bhūmitva* etc., are recognized in all the immoveable and moveable things. This theory goes a step further in comparison with the *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy.

In this way the ultimate *Dharmī* god or Śiva is to be inferred and His consort or *Dharma* (having innumerable worldly *Dharmas* and *Dharmīs)* is *Mahāśakti*. The great Śaiva Vedāntist Appayya Dīkṣita states—

ब्रह्मधर्मत्वेनावतिष्ठमानाया एव चिच्छक्तेः
स्वयमपि चेतनान्तरत्वेनावस्थाने कानुपपत्तिः।

(Ānanda Laharī Candrikā 6)

Also in *Ratnatraya Parīkṣā* we see that the only one, eternal, void of a little blemish, full of ultimate happiness. *Brahmacaitanya* disunites Himself into two forms as *Dharma* and *Dharmī* and the *Dharma* being His *(Dharmī's) Śakti.**

नित्यं निर्दोषगन्धं निरतिशयसुखं ब्रह्मचैतन्यमेकं।
धर्मो धर्मीतिभेदद्वितयमिति पृथग्भूय मायावशेन॥

Now let us consider about the *Dharma* as a component of four *Puruṣārthas*. Though it is said about the *Dharma* that—

धर्मस्य तत्त्वं निहितं गुहायां
महाजनो येन गतः स पन्थाः।

(Mahābhārata Vana Parva 314. 119)

* Śrīvatsa Kālidāsa too has remarked—'त्वं प्रकाशयसि यं स सृज्यते धर्मिधर्मतनुरर्थ ईश्वरे'।
(Cidgagana Candrikā)

"The essence of *Dharma* is hidden in the cave of mystery that is beyond the human reason, so for the leading a good life everyone should follow the way of great men or sages." Notwithstanding, our scriptures have dealt with every crook and nook of the *Dharma*. The great sage Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana expresses his feelings—

ऊर्ध्वबाहुर्विरौम्येष न च कश्चिच्छृणोति माम्।
धर्मादर्थश्च कामश्च स किमर्थं न सेव्यते॥

"Lifting up my arms, I proclaim but alas, none listens to me *Dharma*, only *Dharma* brings the prosperity (अर्थ) and fulfilment of desires (काम), O men why do not ye avail it "?

(*Svargārohaṇa Parva* 5. 75).

Now the question arises about what this *Dharma* is. What are its means ? Jaimini defines it—

'चोदनालक्षणोऽर्थो धर्मः।'

Vaidika command for the due actions is *Codanā* and the thing suggested by it is said as *Dharma*. It associates the doer with the final happiness. Śabara Swāmī advocates—

'चोदना हि क्रियायाः प्रवर्त्तकं वचनमाहुः। तया यो लक्ष्यते, सोऽर्थः पुरुषं निःश्रेयसेन संयुनक्तीति प्रतिजानीमहे।'

(*Śabara Bhāṣya*)

The word inciting (प्रवर्त्तक) also designates the desisting from (निवर्त्तक) as 'नानृतं वदेत्', न मांसमश्नीयात्'. Kumārila Bhatta elucidates—

प्रवृत्तौ वा निवृत्तौ वा या शब्दश्रवणेन धीः।
सा चोदनेति सामान्यं लक्षणं हृदि स्थितम्॥

(*Ślokavārtika* 210-211)

1. Inciting sentences (प्रवर्त्तक वाक्य)—"स्वर्गकामो यजेत्, सत्यं ब्रूयात्" i. e., "the person, who wants paradise after death, must perform sacrifice or *Agnihotra*, everyone must speak the truth etc."

2. Desisting sentences (निवर्त्तक वाक्य)—do not tell a lie, do not eat flesh, 'मा हिंस्यात् सर्वा भूतानि'—do not kill even an insect etc.

There are different opinions about this *Dharma*—

1. Bhartṛhari, the great grammarian and *Mīmāmsaka* says—

अवस्थित एव धर्मः। स तु अग्निहोत्रादिभिरभिव्यज्यते। तत्प्रेरितस्तु फलप्रदो भवति।

(Mahābhāṣya Dīpikā p. 30, 31)

"*Dharma* is an abiding or eternal thing, it appears through the *Agnihotra* etc., and stired up by this appearance it *(Dharma)* produces results."

2. **वृद्धमीमांसका यागादिकर्मनिर्वर्त्यमपूर्वं नाम धर्ममभिवदन्ति।**

(Jayanta Bhatta, Nyāya Mañjarī Part I)

The ancient *Mīmāṁsakas* opine that the *Apūrva* which is produced by the deeds as sacrifice etc., is called *Dharma.*

3(A). **न केवलं लोके वेदेऽपि 'यज्ञेन यज्ञमयजन्त देवास्तानि धर्माणि प्रथमान्यासन्।**

(Ṛgveda X. 90. 16) इति

यजति शब्दवाच्यमेव धर्मं समामनन्ति।

(Śabaraswāmī Mīmāṁsā Darśana I. 1. 2)

(B). **अपूर्वं पुनरस्ति। यत आरम्भः शिष्यते—स्वर्गकामो यजेतेति। इतरथा हि विधानमनर्थकं स्यात्। भङ्गित्वाद्यागस्य।**

(Ibid II. 1. 5)

(A)—Not only in the human society but in the *Vedas* too, it is said that the very word 'यजति' (one performs sacrifice) denotes the *Dharma.* In the *Ṛgveda,* the *Ṛṣi* of *Puruṣa Sūkta* observes—*Devas* have had worshipped *Yajñapuruṣa* Viṣṇu through sacrifice, and these *Yajñ* as were chief *Dharmas.*

Going on Śabaraswāmī accepts—

(B) There is an element called *Apūrva* also, for which the rite (स्वर्गकामो यजेत) is prescribed, otherwise injunction goes in vain because the *Yāga* is perishable.

In the philosophy of *Pūrva Mīmāṁsā, Apūrva* stands for the destiny produced from a good deed like *Yajña* and *Dāna* etc.

The followers of Prabhākara *(Guru)* maintain that—

वाक्यार्थ एव नियोगात्माऽपूर्व शब्दवाच्यः, धर्म शब्देन स एवोच्यत इति प्राभाकराः॥

(Nyāya Mañjarī Part I)

The meaning of the sentence 'स्वर्गकामो यजेत' as an injunction of the *Veda* is said by the term *Apūrva*, and that is also called *Dharma*.

Jayanta Bhatta, asserts that it is adopted by ordinary people that *Dharma* comes out from sacrifice and donation etc. This is the witness of the doctrin of impression (संस्कार) and *Veda* too supports this view telling "यज्ञेन यज्ञमयजन्त देवास्तानि धर्माणि प्रथमान्यासन्।" Being firmly fixed on the mind of a doer impression (संस्कार) of good deed * remains in the form of *Dharma* and it goes to produce desired results in future.

यागदानादिना धर्मो भवतीत्यपि लौकिकाः।
प्रयोगाः सन्ति ते चामी संस्क्रियापक्षसाक्षिणः ॥

एवं यज्ञेन यज्ञम्—इति वैदिकोऽपि प्रयोगो तद्विषय एव व्याख्येयः। तस्य स्थायित्वेन कालान्तरे फलदानयोग्यतापत्तेः।

संस्कारो नृगुणः स्थायी तस्माद्धर्म इति स्थितम्।
तस्माच्च फलनिष्पत्तेः.................. ॥

(*Nyāya Mañjarī*)

Vaiyākaraṇas hold that the word *Dharma* stands for sacrifice *Dāna* etc., which are the means of *Dharma*, because 'तानि धर्माणि प्रथमान्यासन्' in this *Śruti* the term has been given in neuter gender.

"**वैयाकरणास्तु 'तानि धर्माणि प्रथमान्यासन्'** (*Ṛgveda* X. 90.16) **इति ऋचि श्रूयमाणं नपुंसकलिङ्गं धर्मशब्दं धर्मसाधनयागादिवाचकमाहुः।**"

(*Ṭīkā* on the *Lingānuśāsana* of Harṣavardhana)

Some say that the *Dharma* is a quality (गुण) of *Buddhi* and others hold that it is a property of *Ātmā*.*

It is to be borne in mind that a person's good or bad thinking, speaking and working consigns itself to the *Citta*. *Citta* is a mine of all the *Saṁskāras* good or bad, secured in the innumerable births. It is individual *Prakṛti* (व्यष्टि प्रकृति) pertaining to every being. Guṇaratna Sūri a commentator of *Ṣaḍdarśana Samuccaya* says—

मौलिक्यसाङ्ख्याः ह्यात्मानमात्मानं प्रति पृथक् प्रधानं वदन्ति। उत्तरे तु सांख्याः सर्वात्मस्वप्येकं नित्यं प्रधानमिति प्रपन्नाः।

* 'धर्मं केचिद्बुद्धिगुणं मन्यन्ते केचिदात्मगुणम्।'

(*Vṛhatī*, by Prabhākara Miśra)

Maulikya Sāṅkhyavādīs hold that there are separate *Prakṛtis* belonging to every *Jīvātmā*. The later *Sāṅkhyas* allege that there is only one eternal *Prakṛti* (प्रधान) among all the souls.

Yuktidīpikā, an ancient commentary on *Sāṅkhyakārikā* also supports the view saying that—

प्रतिपुरुषमन्यत्प्रधानं शरीराद्यर्थं करोति। तेषां च माहात्म्यशरीरप्रधानं यदा प्रवर्त्तते तदेतराण्यपि, तन्निवृत्तौ च तेषामपि निवृत्तिः—इति पौरिकः सांख्याचार्यो मन्यते।

(*Kārikā* 56)

A very ancient *Sāṅkhyācārya* named Paurika opines that for the body etc., the creator makes different *Pradhānas* (प्रकृति) for different men. When *Mūla Prakṛti* or *Pradhāna*, pertaining to *Māhātmya Śarīra* or the creator, comes into action the other *Prakṛtis* also emerge and when it rests all the minor *Prakṛtis* go to cease.

Citta the 'व्यष्टि प्रकृति' is a combination of *Buddhi, Manaḥ. Ahaṅkāra* and other faculties. *Saubhāgya Subhagodaya* states—

बुद्ध्यादि सामरस्य स्वरूपचित्तात्मिका मता प्रकृतिः।

Commenting upon 'षट्त्रिंशत्तत्त्वानि' an aphorism of *Paraśurāma Kalpa Sūtra* Rāmeśvarasūri elucidates—

सत्त्वरजस्तमोगुणानां साम्यरूपा प्रकृतिश्चित्तापरपर्याया त्रयोदशं तत्त्वम्।

Śaṅkarācārya in his *Bhāṣya* on *Gītā*—"प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति" illustrates—

प्रकृतिर्नाम पूर्वकृतधर्माधर्मादिसंस्कारो वर्तमान जन्मादावभिव्यक्तः सा प्रकृतिः।

The impressions of *Dharma* and *Adharma* or virtue and sin, printed on the *Citta* of previous births appear in the body of present birth, are said as *Prakṛti*—a radical form of being. In the *Jñāna Kaṇḍa* of *Tripurārahasya* it is said—

सुषुप्तौ प्रकृतिर्ज्ञेया तदन्ते चित्तमुच्यते।
वासनापिण्डसहिता चितिश्चित्तमुदीरितम्॥

In *Suṣupti* or entire insensibility of the world i.e., in the cosmic dissolution which is 'प्रकृति', it is said *Citta* in the beginning of creations *Citi* the pure *Ātmā*, when comes in union with the heap of *Vāsanās* or *Saṁskāras*, is said *Citta*. When *Sattva Guṇa* exceeds in this *Citta* it is called *Buddhi*, when *Rajo Guṇa* becomes in excess it is *Manaḥ* and when *Tamo Guṇa* happens to be powerful it is *Ahaṅkāra*. Also *Citta* is a record book of *Dharmarāja*. Seeing

this he leads the people to heaven, hell or different wombs in this world.

It is true that in a particular situation that which seems to be *Dharma* becomes *Adharma* and vice versa. So Manu, the father of mankind has said—

यस्तर्केणानुसन्धत्ते स धर्मं वेद नेतरः ।

(Manusmṛti)

The person, who takes up the reasoning for investigation, knows the *Dharma* and none else, but the reasoning must be supported by *Veda* and *Śāstra*. It is said—

"The word *Dharma* is a word of very vide connotation and means not only, duties enforcible in a court of law but duties and obligations of all kinds—legal, social, religious, ethical, political and all others—from morning to night, from birth to death including rites and ceremonies pre-natal and post-natal."

Now it is the occasion to deal with *Sanātana Dharma*. Our great ancestor Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana says—

ये च वेदविदो विप्रा ये चाध्यात्मविदो जनाः ।
ते वदन्ति महात्मानं कृष्णं धर्मं सनातनम् ॥
साक्षाद्देवः पुराणोऽसौ स हि धर्मः सनातनः ।

(Viṣṇu S. Nāma, Bhagavad Guṇa Darpaṇa Ṭīkā p.380)

Lord Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa is *Sanātana Dharma;* it is alleged by the knowers of *Veda* and *Upaniṣads*. In the very outset of creation, the Lord Viṣṇu Himself originates a constitution to maintain law and order in the entire universe, which is also called *Sanātana Dharma*.

As it keeps the world in the right way so it is said *Dharma*. *Dharma* sustains the offsprings of all kinds; it supports all the things to preserve their natural disposition, therefore it is called *Dharma*.

धारणाद्धर्म इत्याहुः धर्मो धारयते प्रजाः ।
यस्माद्धारणसंयुक्तः स धर्म इति निश्चयः ॥

(Mahābhārata)

Ṛgveda declares—

त्रीणि पदा विचक्रमे विष्णुर्गोपा अदाभ्यः । अतो धर्माणि धारयन् ।

(I. 22.18)

Viṣṇu the imperishable and protector of all the worlds had strid the earth, heaven and the space between, with his three long steps, placing the *Dharmas* or moral and religious merits, laws and proper characteristics on them. *Bhagavadgītā* says that Lord Kṛṣṇa is a guard of *Sanātana Dharma*.

शाश्वतधर्म गोप्ता । (XI. 18)

शाश्वतस्य नित्यस्य धर्मस्य गोप्ता । *(Śaṅkara)*

शाश्वतस्य वैदिकस्य धर्मस्य गोप्ता । *(Nīlakaṇṭha)*

Vaidika Dharma, Sanātana Dharma, Ṛṣimātā or *Isimātā* as stated by Bauddhas, are sinonyms. Nowadays it is called *Hindu Dharma*.

Bhaviṣya Purāṇa goes to sum up the whole *Sanātana Dharma* into five forms as hereunder—

धर्मः श्रेयः समुद्दिष्टं श्रेयोऽभ्युदयलक्षणम् ।
स तु पञ्चविधः प्रोक्तो वेदमूलः सनातनः ॥
अस्य सम्यगनुष्ठानात् स्वर्गो मोक्षश्च जायते ।
इह लोके सुखैश्वर्यमतुलं च खगाधिप ॥

(Quoted by Kullūka Bhatta—*Manusmṛti Ṭīkā* II. 1-2)

वर्णधर्मः स्मृतस्त्वेकः आश्रमाणामतः परम् ।
वर्णाश्रमस्तृतीयस्तु गौणो नैमित्तिकस्तथा ॥

(Manusmṛti Ṭīkā II. 25)

Dharma is *Śreya* or good fortune and that *Śreya* denotes prosperity. This *Sanātana Dharma* is fivefold and its root cause is *Veda*. The person who follows it, attains heaven and final freedom (मोक्ष); O Garuḍa, also he gets pleasure and prosperity in this life that has no resemblance. The five *Dharmas are* stated thus—

1. *Varṇa Dharma*, 2. *Āśrama Dharma*, 3. *Varṇāśrama Dharma* and 4. *Gauṇa Dharma* (that, which begins through some qualities (गुण) that is 'मूर्धाभिषिक्तस्य प्रजानां परिपालनम्' and 5. *Naimittika* which goes on through an occasional cause as *Prāyaścitta Vidhi*.

Matsya Purāṇa also informs us that following group of qualities is the root of *Sanātana Dharma*—

अद्रोहश्चाप्यलोभश्च दमो भूतदया तपः ।
ब्रह्मचर्यं ततः सत्यमनुक्रोशः क्षमा धृतिः ॥
सनातनस्य धर्मस्य मूलमेतद्दुरासदम् ।

There are *Parama Dharmas*[1] also mentioned in our scriptures Manu says—

आचारः परमो धर्मः । (I. 108)

Good conduct is pre-eminent *Dharma*. Yājñavalkya asserts—

इज्याचारदमाहिंसादानस्वाध्यायकर्मणाम् ।
अयं तु परमो धर्मो यद्योगेनात्मदर्शनम् ॥

Among the performances like ritual, virtuous behaviour, self-command, harmlessness, donation and muttering of prayers or perusal of *Vedas* it is foremost *Dharm* to attain *Ātmasākṣātkāra* through *Yoga*.

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad ascertains the glory of *Dharma* in these words—

स नैव व्यभवच्छ्रेयोरूपमत्यसृजत धर्मं तदेतत् क्षत्रस्य क्षत्रं यद्धर्मः तस्माद्धर्मात् परं नास्ति ।

(I. 4. 14)

Dharma is the king of kings. There is nothing more excellent than the *Dharma*.

Dharma is specially related to behaviour or action and not only talking about quoting the various scriptures. The meaning of scripture is called *Satya* and when it comes to an action it is said *Dharma*. Śaṅkarācārya elucidates the above *Bṛ. Upaniṣad*—

स धर्मो व्यवहारलक्षणः सत्यमिति यथाशास्त्रार्थता स एवानुष्ठीयमानो धर्मनामा भवति ।

Dr. S. Rādhā Kṛṣṇan in his '*Recovery of Faith*' says—"Religions, at their best, insist on behaviour more than on belief. Orthodoxy is not confined to the defining of faith it includes the living of it. Definition is the means and not the end. We must live religion in truth and deed and not merely profess it in words."

1. (A) अहिंसा परमो धर्मः । (*Mahābhārata Anuśāsana Parva* 115.1)
(B) आनृशंस्यं परो धर्मः । (*Mahābhārata Vana Parva* 373. 76)
(C) स वै पुंसां परो धर्मो यतो भक्तिरधोक्षजे । (*Bhāgavata*)

The above writer uses the word religion in place of *Dharma* but John Mackenzie asserts—" In India in those days (in the time of *Dharma Sūtras*) no clear distinction was drawn between moral and religious duty, usage, customary observance and law and *Dharma* was the term which was applied to the whole complex forms of conduct that were settled or established."

Dharma Sūtrakāra, Āpastamba observes—

यं त्वार्याः क्रियमाणं प्रशंसन्ति स धर्मो यं गर्हन्ते सोऽधर्मः ।

(*Paṭala* VII. 7)

The doing, which Āryas* (followers of code of conduct) approve, is *Dharma* and which they condemn is *Adharma*.

Boudhāyana, a great *Dharmasūtrakāra* recommends threefold *Dharma* saying that the first is preached in every branch of the *Veda* second is disposed in *Smṛtis* and the third which is observed by the *Śiṣṭas (Sages)*.

उपदिष्टो धर्मः प्रतिवेदम् ।

(*Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra* I. 1)

स्मार्तो द्वितीयः ।

(*Ibid.* I.3)

तृतीयः शिष्टागमः ।

(*Ibid.* I. 4)

Saṁvarta Smṛti defines the word *Dharma* in this way—That righteous deed is called *Dharma*, which is not against the *Veda* and came traditionally in any place of the country.

यस्मिन् देशे य आचारः पारम्पर्यक्रमागतः ।
आम्नायैरविरुद्धश्च स धर्मः परिकीर्तितः ॥

In the absence of *Dharma* when *Adharma* prevails what does result in the nature ? *Caraka Saṁhitā* of *Āyurveda* comments—

यदा वै देशनगरनिगमजनपदप्रधाना धर्ममुत्क्रम्याधर्मेण प्रजां वर्तयन्ति तदाश्रितोपाश्रिताः पौरजानपदा व्यवहारोपजीविनश्च तमधर्ममभिवर्द्धयन्ति ततः

* Racial concept of Aryanism is baseless and trifle. Manu defines an Ārya thus—

कर्तव्यमाचरन् कार्यमकर्तव्यमनाचरन् ।
तिष्ठति प्रकृताचारे स एवार्य इति स्मृतः ॥

He alone is an Arya who sticks to his long established code of conduct and does not deviate therefrom.

सोऽधर्मः प्रसभं धर्ममन्तर्द्धत्ते, ततस्तेऽन्तर्हितधर्माणो देवताभिरपि त्यज्यन्ते तेषां यथान्तर्हितधर्मणामधर्मप्रधानानामपक्रान्तदेवतानामृतवो व्यापद्यन्ते तेन नापो यथाकालं देवो वर्षति न वा वर्षति विकृतं वा वर्षति, वाता न सम्यगभिवान्ति, क्षितिर्व्यापद्यते सलिलान्युपशुष्यन्ति, ओषधयः स्वभावं परिहायापद्यन्ते विकृतिं तत उद्ध्वंसन्ते जनपदाः स्पृश्योऽभ्यवहार्य दोषात्।

(*Vimānasthāna Adhyāya* 3)

When the chiefs of a country, a city, a market, a *Janapada* neglect their duties (धर्म) and behave with the people wrongfully (अधर्म) then their dependents and the others near to them, the citizens and the inhabitants of a *Janapada*, the persons earning their livelihood through judicial or other professions, cause to increase unrighteousness (अधर्म). Then that irreligion forcibly causes the *Dharma* to disappear. When the *Dharma* vanishes and *Adharma* prevails, then the divine powers quit them, thus seasons become disordered. So no rain falls at the right time or does not rain at all or it falls in hails, the winds do not blow properly, the soil becomes unproductive, waters dry up, herbs leaving their nature become defective, then the *Janapadas* go to ruin owing to the defect in the food stuff and water etc. In the language of *Āyurveda Dharma* is called 'सद्वृत्त'.

Viṣṇugupta Kautalya or Cāṇakya goes to expound common *Dharma* in his great work *Arthaśāstra* hereby—

It is 'स्वधर्म' of all to have refraining from cruelty truthfulness, purity of body and mind, unenviousness, compassion and mercifulness. It leads the *Dhārmikas* to heaven as well as to salvation.

सर्वेषामहिंसा सत्यं शौचमनसूयाऽनृशंस्यं क्षमा च स्वधर्मः स्वर्गाय आनन्त्याय च।

व्यवस्थितार्यमर्यादः कृतवर्णाश्रमस्थितिः।
त्रय्या हि रक्षितो लोकः प्रसीदति न सीदति॥

(*Adhikarṇa* I. *Adhyāya* 4)

Who has layed down the right way of propriety of conduct and has made himself firm in *Varṇāśrama Dharma*, protected by *Vedatrayī* he gets pleasure and does not feel unhappiness.

स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः।

(*Gītā* XVIII. 47)

In this context of *Gītā,* 'स्वधर्म' means *Varṇāśrama Dharma,* and in 'सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य' *Dharma* stands for any good or bad deed or feelings of joy and sorrow or as Abhinavagupta suggests—

''यदिदं युद्धकरणे प्रासङ्गिकं बन्धुबधादि तस्य सर्वस्याहं कर्तेत्यात्मधर्मतां परित्यज्य तथाचार्यादिहननक्रियानिषेधे ममाधर्मो भविष्यतीति मनसा विहाय''

I am the doer of murder of our kinsmen etc., in this battlefield, is an egotistic thought and this is *Ātma dharmatā* and as the killing of *Ācārya* etc., is prohibited in *Śāstras* so killing them I am doing sin (अधर्म), this thought is also *Dharma,* Lord Kṛṣṇa says—leave these *Dharmas* and take refuge in me.

Pāṇini, the great grammarian points out how the word *Dharma* has two applications. First—an act of religious merit as suggested by the *Sūtra*—'धर्मं चरति' (*Pāṇini* IV. 4. 41) 'धार्मिकः' and the second custom or social usage, as denoted by the *Sūtra* 'धर्मपथ्यर्थन्यायादनपेते' *(Pāṇini* 4. 4. 92)—'धर्मादनपेतम्—अप्रच्युतं धर्म्यम्'. Toll is also said by the word *Dharmya,* because the tax is fixed by the *Dharma* or custom. *Kāśikā* a commentary on *Aṣṭādhyāyī* explains—'धर्म्यमित्याचार नियतं देयमुच्यते'.

After receiving the education when a *Snātaka* wants to go to *Gṛhasthāśrama, Kulapati* delivers a last instruction to him saying 'सत्यं वद, धर्मं चर' etc., *(Tattirīya Upaniṣad Śikṣā.* V. 11). Here *Dharma* stands for good conduct which the teacher wants to emphasize. When *Ṛṣi* Vālmīki had written 'रामो विग्रहवान् धर्मः' Rāma is personified *Dharma* (III. 37. 113) he wanted to manifest the whole *Sanātana Dharma* in a single form.

Long before the Egyptian or Sumerian cultures, there flourished Indus valley civilization in India. Though Sir John Marshall assigned it *Prāg-Vaidika* but this theory is now refuted. The culture[1] of Mohenjodaro and Harappa was post *Vaidika* and it was fully influenced by the *Vaidika* or *Sanātana Dharma.* Swāmī Śaṅkarānanda, the author of *The Ṛgvedic culture of the Pre-Historic Indus* writes—

1. Nearly 30 years ago, Dr. Waddel wrote a book *(The Indo-sumerian seals decifered)* on the culture discovered at Harrapa and Mohenjodaro in which he tried to prove that these cities were of post Vedic date and that the seal and other objects of interest were completely Aryan in character and that the language impressed on the seals was *Saṁskṛta.*
(Āryataraṅgiṇī page 13)

"Those people went with the script and culture as well as language from the Indus valley. These colonists spread the Indus civilization to the Mediterranian shores and eventually become the fathers of the civilization of Greece and Rome". (Vol I, chapter 1 page 50).

When the old Sumerian[2] Chaldean, Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian and Phoenecian cultures are indebted to *Vaidika* or *Sanātana Dharma,* then what to say about Zoroastrinism and Christianity etc.

Taoism and confuciusism of China are also debters of the scriptures like *Upaniṣad* and *Rāmāyaṇa* of *Sanātana Dharma* respectively. *Āryataraṅgini.* remarks—

"The great Chinese philosopher, Lao Tse (600 B.C) bases his theories on the *Advaita.* His Tāo[3] (usually translated as the hard way or *Tapo Mārga)* is equatable with the imperishable soul or *Ātmā*" (page 15).

"Confucius (born in 551 B. C.) seems to have heard of Buddha and imbibed some of his philosophy, without specifically denying God, he emphasized good conduct and morality as above all religious speculation or ritualism" (*Ibid.* page 16).

For knowledge of *Dharma* Manu is the foremost refuge. It is said in *Vaidika* texts that 'यत्किञ्च मनुरवदत् तद्भेषजम्'—whatever Manu has said is medicine. Not only in Bhāratavarṣa but all over the world the ruling of Manu was in vogue. The famous historian Manning observers:—

"It has been remarked by various authors that in analogy with Manu or Manus as the father of mankind or of the Aryas, German mythology recognises Manus as the ancestor of Tuetons. The English 'man' and the German 'menu' appear also to be taken to the word Manu as the German 'Menesh' presents a close resemblance to *'Manush'* of *Saṁskṛta.*[4]

—Ancient and Medieval India

2. See *Ārya Taranginī: The Saga of the Indo-Āryans,* Vol.I—A.Kalyan Raman.
3. *'Tāo in Physics'* is a famous book in which quotations from *Vaidika* literature are seen.
4. "India was the first planted and peopled country after the flood."
—Raleigh—*History of the World*

After the great law-giver Manu, Yājñavalkya is the most oft-cited authority on *Hindu Dharma* and Vijñāneśvara also an author of extraordinary work (a commentary on *Yājñavalkya Smṛti) Mitākṣarā* which was in vogue in Bengal, Madras and other places of India for civil procedure (व्यवहार).

At last I want to quote *Amara Kośa* for the meaning of *Dharma*, it runs thus—

धर्मा: पुण्य-यम-न्याय-स्वभावाचार-सोमपा: ।

(*Kāṇḍa* III. *Śloka* 139)

Śukrācārya, the great statesman praises *Dharma* like this—"The person who has increased his virute in the form of 'स्वधर्म' the gods become his servants and what to say for men in this world."

तप: स्वधर्मरूपं यद्वर्धितं येन वै सदा ।
देवास्तु किङ्करास्तस्य किं पुनमर्नुजा भुवि ॥

(*Śukra Nīti Sāra* I. 24)

The *Upaniṣads*, i.e., the philosophical disquisitions contained in the *Vedas* are likened to cows; and Śrī Kṛṣṇa (who, in his boyhood, actually led the life of a cowherd and was therefore an expert professional milker) is described as the milker of the *Upaniṣad*—cows. Arjuna—the representative and spokesman of us all *(Naras)*— the typical *Nara*, so to speak—was the calf, who first tasted that milk which was milked by the divine cowherd for the benefit of Arjuna to start with and for all humanity thereafter, and which is the great ambrosia (or nectar) which is known as the *Bhagavadgītā*.

The ladle for pouring oblation on the sacrificial fire, the oblation itself, the sacrificial fire, the sacrificer, the sacrifice, nay, the goal to be attained by one who is completely merged in *Brahma*, everything is *Brahma*, the Eternal substance.

Worship of Womanhood in Sanātana Dharma

पितृभिर्भ्रातृभिश्चैताः पतिभिर्देवरैस्तथा ।
पूज्या भूषयितव्याश्च बहुकल्याणमीप्सुभिः ॥

"Father, brother, husband and brother-in-law who aspire their welfare, must respect and enrich with ornaments the womenfolk of the family."

यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः ।
यत्रैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफलाः क्रियाः ॥

"Gods abide in those homes where women are worshipped. Where women are not worshipped all activities of such persons prove futile."

शोचन्ति जामयो यत्र विनश्यत्याशु तत्कुलम् ।
न शोचन्ति तु यत्रैता वर्धते तद्धि सर्वदा ॥

"The family gets extinct or ruined soon in which womenfolk suffer miseries. That family prospers where women are not made to suffer."

जामयो यानि गेहानि शपन्त्यप्रतिपूजिताः ।
तानि कृत्याहतानीव विनश्यन्ति समन्ततः ॥

"The families, cursed by disrespected women, get completely destroyed as if struck by the spell of *Kṛtyā* (black magic)".

तस्मादेताः सदा पूज्या भूषणाच्छादनाशनैः ।
भूतिकामैर्नरैर्नित्यं सत्कारेषूत्सवेषु च ॥

"The persons seeking prosperity should always entertain their women folk by ornaments, charming dresses and delicious food more particularly at the time of festivals and other ceremonies."

(*Manusmṛti* III. 55—59)

One who has controlled his self and is free from likes and dislikes is never excited while enjoying the various sense-objects with his disciplined senses. That unruffled nature rids him of all afflictions, and the mind (reason) of that self-complacent man is established (in God) in no time.

Is Universal Dharma Possible ?

—*S. K. Trivedi*

Stumbling Block—

In this age of perversion, conceit and egoism talking of *Dharma* itself may look retrograde, what to say of universal *Dharma*. For one reason or other, *Dharma* everywhere finds itself at the receiving end today. It is scoffed off by almost everyone, whose opinion matters in the society. All find it a stumbling block (in the way of their high ambitions), something out of date, worn out, hopelessly senile. Politicians are forcing it to retire from day to day affairs; thinkers want it to leave the field of thoughts wide open to themselves; business people are highly dissatisfied with its claim to regulate the morality of their trade;......; even the religionists, wholly dependent on it, want it to keep itself confined to rites, and (unending) discussions and debates. The words God and religion have become sectarian symbols in our pluralistic society—for no mistake of their own.

Fit as a Fiddle—

Irrespective of all these perversities, *Dharma* or religion is neither dead nor efface. It is eternally alive and kicking—invincible even for its avowed enemies. It is religion and religion alone which provides a solid support to the faith of a person, shapes his concept, sharpens his intellect, directs his thoughts, channelises his feelings and energy, rationalises his views, modifies his morality, makes his existence meaningful and fruitful with respect to humanity at large. 'धर्मो रक्षति रक्षितः' (only he is protected who protects *Dharma)* and 'यतो धर्मस्ततो जयः' (victory comes to and through *Dharma* only) have yet not lost their glister. Who can deny the fact that all the dark, terrifying forces of doom are an obvious result of neglect of religion ? Self-centredness, debauchery, insincerity, infidelity, indiscipline, disharmony, restlessness, isolationism, indifference, ennui, unhappiness,

imbalance, injustice, inactivity, dependence, pessimism, corruption, violence, terrorism, gambling, despotism, deception, exploitation, anarchy, cruelty, poaching........,hallowness of the stuffed inner self, sense of insecurity, defeatist mentality, aching void in the heart,.....all have their roots somewhere in diversion from the religious path. People, in vain, are trying to discipline matter after losing the spiritual values (so gallantly). Marriage, the most pious institution, has lost its sanctity. Estranged marriages are not a rare phenomenon even in the most unthought of families. The most inhuman and heinous act of bride-burning and dowry-killing, so prevalent around us, is the direct outcome of the loss of spirituality. Is n't aids, the most dreaded disease of today nature's revenge (rather punishment) for man's over indulgence in bodily pleasures ? And what about the population explosion, the most gnawing problem faced by our planet ? Doesn't it sprout from inner emptiness and ignorance of Lord's omnipresence and omnipotence ? Lack of faith breeds lack of confidence and it, in turn paves the way for one's crushing defeat.

Religion—

Religion is still the best transforming, unifying and edifying force in the world. Its Latin root 'Religio' indicates the possible use of three verbs—'Relegere' (constantly turn to, or conscientiously observe), 'Religari' (binding oneself back to one's origin and goal) and 'Reeligere' (choose again to live piously by his origin and goal). Thus religion implies constant awareness of one's origin, goal and obligations. It regulates all activities of man—past (origin), present (morality) and future (goal). In its broad meaning it is the thread in the garland of mankind, whose weakness can ruin the social matrix.

Secularism—The Practical Religion—

It is unfortunate that religion and secularism are taken as opponents. Secularism is the most practical form of religion. Its Latin root 'Saecularis' means worldly, temporal or age-old. Hence secularism is the worldly religion based on the age-old traditions, moralities, and principles. It is a positive aspect, not a negative one, the same what the *Vedāntīs* mean by 'धारणात् धर्मः' (it becomes religion only by adopting). Food, however energetic,

can give you health only when you digest it. Similarly religion can perform miracles only when you follow it. It is a path to take one to his goal (not the goal itself). It is the set of duties which is a must for an aspirant. Once on your way, you need not be afraid of anyone, but if you stray away from it, you don't need an enemy ! Gāndhījī was not wrong when he said, ends do not justify means. Ill-gotten wealth can make you rich but not respectable.

Secularism is the religion of a pluralistic society. But secularism of the west is different from that of the east. In the west, all the societies had the same scriptures, the problem was only of interpretation. East is the real testing ground for it, where it has to compete not only with a host of religions, but also with growing intolerance and theocratic tendencies, bordering on bigotry and fanaticism.

East is East—

India may not have been the birthplace of mankind, but it has certainly been the birthplace of humanity and the higher values of life. Geographically, spirituality rose in the east and went on declining as it travelled to the west. Out of the six major religions (populationwise) of the world four *(Sanātana, Jainism, Buddhism,* and *Sikhism)* were born in India and the other two (Christianity and Islam) in the middle east. Minor religions like Judaic, Zoroastrian, and Bahai which rarely found a cordial atmosphere and remained nomadic for hundreds of years, too, were also from the middle eastern part of the globe. Is it surprising that no religion was born in the west (which is rightly or wrongly, accepted by the others as their model) ? It is not because the land was barren there. It simply shows restlessness and different type of thinking in that society. Peace is a must for material as well as spiritual progress. It is the internal unrest which made the people slave-traders and colonialists without any remorse. It is the same unrest which made people pugnacious, made them fight for centuries together. Is it a wonder that the two great wars found ready battlefields in the heart of Europe ? Thinking only makes us what we are and tranquil minds only can fathom the inner depth, much more difficult than conquering Everest or reaching the other celestial bodies.

West is West—

The prophets of the west have been Karl Marx, Charles Darvin and Sigmund Freud. The first vituperatively denounced religion, found in it the easiest whipping boy and pronounced it the opium of people. (Little wonder, the people renounced it and went for opium (drugs) instead, which is emaciating mankind ethically, morally, culturally, physically and economically). The second advocated evolution as opposed to creation and did away with God and religion (making the offshoots revel in discarding the roots). The third sickened the society by generalising his findings, based on the analysis of diseased minds, and endangered the sanctity of relations, even the filial piety.

Even now India (the east) has not exhausted all its resources: Swāmī Vivekānanda (who showed the world religion in its true perspective), Swāmī Rāmatīrtha (who pointed to the basic unity of religions, lying hidden under the rubble of superfluous verbosity), Swāmī Prabhupāda (who made the western youth dance in ecstasy, chanting '*Hare Rāma, Hare Kṛṣṇa*' Jiddu Kṛṣṇamūrti (who became a symbol of the unity of religions and has become panacea for the tension-ridden world),.....have made the latest contribution in the field. Weren't Anne Bessant and the Pondichery Mother transformed in India ? Could *Maharṣi Arobindo, Maharṣi* Ramaṇa, Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṁsa....... come from the west ?

The Twin Shall Meet—

The purpose of above analysis is not to prove that all is good here and bad there. Exceptions are not rules and generalizations don't eliminate exceptions. It is simply to highlight historical and geographical facts. Anyway, the chasm between the east and west can't be allowed to continue or widen. It has to shrink, if not vanish altogether. The world is no more a motley crowd of unfamiliar faces. Isolationism cannot hope to become the order of the day. It is negation of religion, ignorance of God and against the norms of civilization. Happiness is reflection of faith, the light of Lord. If our lips are continually pursed, the corners of our mouths are ever down, something is amiss our religion. Unrest is the by

product of our inability to cope with the pressure of reality. We are judged not by our scriptures and preachings but by the life we live and the way we behave, specially in unusual circumstances. Love, not hatred, is the core of religion.

The aim of religion is to make us mentally and spiritually sound, to transform us, and a truly religious person is one who lives by love, reason and faith. He respects the life of all creatures; and respect leads to love, devotion and dedication. Love, not fear, makes intimacy possible. Delight and well-being (of the beloved) are the two poles of love. A successful life is one inspired by Love and directed by reason. Even a small act of sincere love achieves more than all the exterior benefits of the whole world. The love that can reshape the earth is universal love, the highest love that can fill the human heart, and it is the live monument of religion.

The economic and political relations can bring the nations together but they can't bring the hearts together. The unfavourable balance of payment keeps sleep away from the debtors, and the permanent interests keep both the enemies and friends guessing. The brave new world needs mental harmony and spiritual attachment. It is unfortunate that the tendency of religions is to keep the people, humanity, society and the world divided. This tendency can't work any more. Hatred may gain in the short term, but once successful, it will go on seeking newer and newer victims; unavoidably turning suicidal in the end. None can be so lucky as to go on getting scapegoats for ever.

Man cannot live by bread alone. He needs faith—faith in anything he can afford. Faith is life. It is faith and faith alone which liberates or justifies him. It being so, religions which rest on faith cannot remain aloof for long. They have to open their hearts, read the writings on the walls, rise to the need of the clock, initiate meaningful dialogue and work out some common ground for peaceful and happy co-existence. "Different religions are like different languages in which the omniloquent Lord has talked with man" (Dr. S. Rādhākṛṣṇan). Differences among them seem important only because of our ignorance of the basic

tennets of our own religions. We should not forget that there are so many things common in all religions e.g., faith in some super-natural power, philosophical depth, spiritual density, human sympathy, divine thoughts, piety, generosity, sinlessness, etc.

A religion is never pessimistic. It cannot be, since pessimism means absence of faith without which a religion cannot exist. It can never permit the things to have gone beyond correction. Its guiding belief lies in the hope that human nature, however distorted,will move towards the good and well-being only in the end. Temptation is not bad, but to be ruled by temptations is certainly bad.

Universal Dharma—Need of the Hour—

There are people in all religions with great far sight and broad outlook who look beyond and sincerely search for truth in the religions other than their own. They are in small minority, no doubt, but then such minorities only have often changed the course of history. Can't they do so once more ? One who has reached the top of Everest can view the world better than those lying flat in a fathomless abyss.

Talking of a religion as 'true' or 'false' is simply egoistic. No religion is false. All are true because they have elements of truth in them. Even an insane, ugly, deformed, handicapped, invalid, stunted,.........man is man. He can't be termed anything else. It is noun that matters, not adjectives.

All religions feel that morality has declined fast. All are anxious to lift it up. All have common goals and aims. Then why can't they come closer and co-operate ? If they don't want to sink together, they have to sail together. It may not be possible under one banner, but can certainly be possible under one umbrella, consisting of all the hues.

Universal *Dharma* will have to include not only all the religions but also atheists, agnostics and doubting Thomases. It would not be a separate religion, one more in the crowd of the existing ones. It will not be based on the teachings of one prophet or scripture. It has to be an abstract one with all the best qualities of all

of them. Old habits die hard; it may be too much to expect them to forget all the age-old rivalries and bickerings and become monolith overnight.

Such religion would simply mean a universal code of conduct, acceptable to all, an enlarged charter of human rights and duties. The great human and humanising qualities such as truth, purity, non-violence, contentment, understanding, devotion to duty, dedication, compassion, discipline, endurance, piety, forgiveness, courage, selflessness, humility, fearlessness, charity etc., will form its core. This is the only way to keep the wheel of humanity rolling and the world going with no danger of a holocaust.

Well, our task, here, is only to explore the possibility of such a religion, and it does exist.

Without content desire cannot cease and so long as desire continues you can never dream of happiness. Again, can desire be got rid of without adoring Śrī Rāma ? Can a tree ever take root without soil ? Can even-mindedness be acquired without spiritual enlightenment ? Can anyone get moving space without ether ? There can be no piety without faith. Can anyone get odour except from the earth and spread one's glory except through austere penance ? Can there be any taste in this world without water ? Can virtue be acquired without waiting upon the wise, any more than colour can exist without the element of fire, my master ? Can the mind be at rest without experiencing the joy inherent in one's own self ? Can there be any sensation of touch without air, and any success without faith ? In a like manner the fear of rebirth can never cease except through worship of Śrī Hari.

—*Mānasa* (VII. 90. 1—8)

Faith in the laws of nature is faith in God. The whole world runs under definite, well-established laws. There is no such thing as chance or accident. God or *Īśvara* is *Taṭastha Lakṣaṇa* of *Brahma*. For the sake of pious worship of *Bhaktas* the *Nirguṇa Brahma* simply appears as *Saguṇa Brahma (Īśvara)*. In reality there is no such thing as *Saguṇa Brahma*. There is existence only. That is ultimate reality. That is truth.

—*Swami Sivananda*

Swāminārāyaṇa Sect–A Branch of Vaiṣṇavism

—*Harijivan Shastri*

It was the time of *Vikrama Saṁvat* 1837, corresponding to April 3, 1781 A. D. when Lord Swāminārāyaṇa was born in Chhapiya near Ayodhya in Brahmin ancestry. His father was Dharmadeva and mother Bhaktidevī. Parents gave him the name as Ghanaśyāma. In early age, he learned all the scriptures and *Vedas* within a very short time from his father.

No longer could he live in home since he aimed at the welfare of all living creatures. After the death of his parents, he left home just at a tender age of eleven. Then he travelled all over Bharata Khaṇḍa (Indian subcontinent) for a period of seven years. As a young *Sādhu* he practised severe self-mortification for the purpose of propagating the religion. His was the greatest renunciation in religious history, for he tore off worldly connections and accepted ascetic way of life at an exceptionally delicate age. He visited all the places of pilgrimage situated in north, east and south of Bharata Khaṇḍa. He entered Gujarat through Lojpur village. After his formal *Dīkṣā* at the hands of Rāmānanda Swāmī, he came to be recognized as Sahajānanda Swāmī and Swāminārāyaṇa. Seeing his worth and virtues and also in view of his own ebbing age, Rāmānanda entrusted his office to Swāminārāyaṇa. Installation ceremony was performed by which the office of the *Ācārya* was conferred on him.

During eighteenth century, chaos and disorder were prevalent in religio-social sphere. Priests and so-called great souls were misleading the masses to superstition and suspicion merely for their selfish interests. Sahajānanda Swāmī formed missionary brigade i.e., a band of about 1800 saints and removed evil customs like child killing, where a newly born child was killed by drowning in milk, *Satī* tradition and other superstitions. Lord Swāminārāyaṇa

and his saints gave sermons in morality, compassion, kindness, truth, chastity etc., and through a nice blending of religion, knowledge, asceticism and devotion removed ignorance, addiction, evil customs, drinking, meat-eating, stealing etc., from the society. This helped the salvation seekers in reaching an exalted spiritual stage.

Together with this, social service was also rendered for public welfare by initiating activities like opening of alm-houses, digging of wells, ponds, performance of nonviolent sacrifices etc. He laid stress on practice rather than hollow preachings. Not only this, but his chaste conduct and transparent discourses inspired thieves, wicked and dreadful robbers to give up their evil deeds.

Only within three decades the master of this sect, revolutionised the fabric of society. This period of time spelt renaissance in religious history.

Because of this divine glory and miracles, trance power and charismatic personality, the extreme sinners and dare devil members of lower classes viz., Kathi, Kolivaghari, Harijana, aboriginal tribes viz., members of forest tribes criminal castes, even muslims and parsis took shelter at Lord Swāminārāyaṇa's feet. Thus He wiped off the vices like hypocrisy, ostentation, injustice which had crept in and started corroding the community in the name of religion.

Now, lakhs of families accepted him as perfect God, and a new sect came into being namely Swāminārāyaṇa Sect as a subdivision of *Vaiṣṇava Dharma*.

Lord Swāminārāyaṇa had also written Śikṣāpatrī for the benefit of all creatures and all-round development of human race. In this holy booklet, he included the essence of all scriptures. To quote, here, "non violence is the best religion" "one should not authenticate, those principles of literatures which advocate refutation of God and his incarnations. Righteousness, as ordained by *Śruti* and *Smṛti* i.e., book of laws, should be regarded as religion and profound love for God should be cultivated coupled with the knowledge that this greatness, forms true concept of devotion." "A feeling of dispassion for any object but God supreme, should be known asceticism and the discriminative knowledge about

soul, *Māyā* and God is the right concept of philosophy. "Kṛṣṇa, His incarnations and even His idols shall be meditated on, but no soul or any other shall be so done."

Even the learned suffers downfall without devotion and good company followers, should serve the mother, the father, the preceptor and the diseased, as long as they exist "Viṣṇu, Śiva, Gaṇapati, Pārvatī and Sūrya should be considered as holy deities and they should be worshipped as such. These dictates imply that he viewed all religions on an equal basis. If one wants to be initiated into this sect, it is necessary to take five vows viz.,—

(1) Not to drink wine. (2) Not to eat meat. (3) Not to steal. (4) Not to commit adultery. (5) Not to give into proselytism or not to eat unholy food, even not to serve such food to others if they don't wish to consume.

Every person may enter this sect including even the members of lower classes after taking five vows as above. Here in this sect, is the sacred grandeur of *Sanātana Dharma*. What a lovely blending of the spirit of *Brahma* expounded by Śaṅkarācārya, principle of *Viśiṣṭādvaita* propounded by Rāmānujācārya, method of devotion of surrender as prescribed by *Vaiṣṇava* faith, control over senses as advocated by Jain sect, prayer as the way of appeasing God as enunciated by Christ, education of social intercourse etc., are well-co-ordinated in this sect.

This interaction brought about a hormonious and cohesive integration of human race. This is nothing but a peaceful and silent metamorphosis of society achieved by Śrī Swāmināräyaṇa in his times and even the erstwhile. British rules had also honoured him in appreciation of the same.

> Freedom from malice, absence of greed, control of the senses, commiseration with one's fellow-creatures, austerity, continence, truthfulness, compassion, forbearance, fortitude: these constitute the unassailable fundamentals of *Sanātana Dharma* (the Eternal Law).

The Universal Validity of the Sanātana Dharma

—*Acharya Kripa Narain Misra*

The *Sanātana Dharma* is the only eternal and universal *Dharma* which has been capable of maintaining and preserving this world of ours from times immemorial. T. S. Eliot, the greatest poet of the post-war generation, has called this world *The Waste Land* and the inhabitants like us the Wastelanders hungry and thirsty, dying and crying. He has found the true solution of turning this dry waste land into the green land of spiritual and moral peace and happiness in only returning and obeying to the eternal message of the *Sanātana Dharma* as prescribed in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (chapter 5, *Brāhmaṇa* 2)—"*dāmyata, datta, dayadhvam; śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ.*"

It is called *Sanātana* because it is eternal and everlasting in nature and spirit; because it has come from the *Sanātana Brahma;* because its ideas and ideals, tenets and teachings also are *Sanātana* and universal. This *Sanātana* faith has been nourishing and guiding men and women of all times and climes throughout the world. The charge of isolation and insularity levelled against our nation has been proved groundless and malicious. The gates of *Āryāvarta* have always been open to one and all from the east to the west. The routes by the sea were very easy. The land routes towards the northwest and the south-east were always familiar. Even the great rivers in the plains were easily navigable. From the times immemorial therefore, the Greek, the Iranian, the Egyptian, the Mangolian and even the European travellers have been visiting this country in search of money, pleasure or knowledge. This is why the *Sanātana Dharma* pervades and impregnates the religious books and scriptures of every country.

every country. The sources of the contact, the dates of the communication, remain unknown. But the contents, the tenets and teachings found in the Greek, Egyptian, Semetic and European writings, prove that the wind has gone there from the Bhāratavarṣa. The light goes from the east to the west.

The *Sanātana Dharma* as even felt pleasure and pride in teaching and preaching the world at large. There was an open invitation to one and all to come and learn—

एतद्देशप्रसूतस्य सकाशादग्रजन्मनः ।
स्वं स्वं चरित्रं शिक्षेरन्पृथिव्यां सर्वमानवाः ॥

(*Manusmṛti* II. 20)

In the words of the greatest philosopher of our age, Dr. S. Rādhākṛṣṇan, "the dictum that........nothing moves in this world which is not Greek in its origin, has become a common place with us. But it is not altogether true. Half the world moves on independent foundation which Hinduism supplied. China and Japan, Tibet and Siam, Burma and Ceylone look to India as their spiritual home.........a stage of civilization which has continued its unbroken course until the present day. It has stood the stress and strain of more than five millenniums of spiritual thought and experience..........though peoples of different races and cultures have been pouring into India from the dawn of history, the *Sanātana Dharma* has been able to maintain its supremacy". In the words of Jawāharalāla Neharū "our motherland has a unique unity amidst diversity; and overwhelmed again and again, her spirit was never conquered.............and even today she ramains unsubdued and unconquered". Readers will be surprised to know that these words were written in 1945 when whole of India was slave and prostrate to the British Rule and all our great leaders were in prisons.

The *Sanātana Dharma* has not only the wonderful surviving and assimilating capacity but an unrivalled unifying and integrating power also. *Dharma* is the unifying and integrating motive power making this vast subcontinent as one home land. It is the religious and spiritual heritage that has united and integrated

this land of numberless castes and creeds, races and religions; languages and living modes into one nation despite different disparities and discords. This integrating force of our *Dharma* has been recognised and appreciated by the foreigners time and again. C. E. M. Joad says—"Europeans live together in a geographical area whose size is not very different from that of India. But we cannot speak of 'a European' with the same appropriateness as we speak of 'an Indian' who in spite of differences of colour, caste and creed looks upon all other Indians as his fellow country-men and upon India as his motherland."

It is our *Sanātana Dharma* that teaches us to love our motherland in the same spirit and devotion in which we love our mother. Our scriptures and religious rites and rituals have always inspired us for this love of our motherland.

आ यद् वामीयचक्षसा मित्र वयं च सूरयः।
व्यचिष्ठे बहुपाय्ये यतेमहि स्वराज्ये॥

(*Rgveda* V. 66. 6)

जनं बिभ्रती बहुधा विवाचसं नानाधर्माणं पृथिवी यथौकसम्।
सहस्रधारा द्रविणस्य मे दुहां ध्रुवेव धेनुरनपस्फुरन्ती॥

(*Atharvaṇaveda* XII. 1. 45)

भारते तु स्त्रियः पुंसो नानावर्णाः प्रकीर्तिताः।
नाना देवार्चने युक्ता नाना कर्माणि कुर्वते॥

(*Kūrma Purāṇa, Uttara.* 41. 21)

जननी जन्मभूमिश्च स्वर्गादपि गरीयसी।

(*Atharva Veda, Pṛthivī Sūkta*)

× × × × × ×

माता भूमिः पुत्रोऽहं पृथिव्याः।

× × × × × ×

सुजलां सुफलां मलयजशीतलां
शस्यश्यामलां मातरं वन्देमातरम्।

× × × × × ×

गायन्ति देवाः किल गीतकानि
धन्यास्तु ते भारतभूमिभागे।

स्वर्गापवर्गास्पदमार्गभूते
भवन्ति भूयः पुरुषाः सुरत्वात् ॥

(*Viṣṇu Purāṇa* II. 3.24)

The Original Source of All Religions—

Every *Sanātanī* is always proud of his motherland, his *Dharma* and his spiritual heritage. It was in this spirit of devotion to the *Svadeśa* and *Svadharma* that Swāmī Vivekānanda, spoke at Chicago in the Parliament of Religions, "I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance.........I am proud to belong to a nation which sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions of the earth."[1]

The *Sanātana Dharma* has no single founder, has no single scripture as the later religions like Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, Hebrewism, Zoroastrianism and Islam have with them. The *Sanātana Dharma* is the original source of all the religions, sects and creeds which appeared and disappeared from time to time on this earth. But one can ask what is the source of the *Sanātana Dharma* ? Where has it come from ? What are its scriptures ?

The Sources of The Sanātana Dharma—

1. The *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads* with their commentaries.
2. The *Brāhmaṇas* and *Gṛhya Sūtras*.
3. The *Smṛtis* with their commentaries *Brahmasūtra* and *Bhaktisūtras*.
4. The *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*.
5. The *Bhagavadgītā* with its commentaries.
6. The various systems of philosophy.
7. The *Purāṇas* and *Āgamas*.
8. *Dharma Śāstra*, *Arthaśāstras* and the *Kāmaśāstra* of Vātsyāyana.

The Significance of Dharma in Society—

Just as the term Hindu or Hinduism does not do full justice with the term *Sanātana Dharma*, in the same way the English term religion does not convey the full connotation of the *Saṁskṛta*

1. *Complete Works*. Vol I. P. 3 (Advaita Āśrama, Calcutta).

word *Dharma* derived from the root *Dhṛ* meaning 'to hold together, to preserve.'[2] *Dharma* is so called because it protects all, *Dharma* preserves all that is created. *Dharma* then is surely that principle which is capable of preserving the universe.

धारणाद् धर्ममित्याहुर्धर्मेण विधृताः प्रजाः ।

(*Mahābhārata Śānti Parva* 109.11)

धारणाद् धर्ममित्याहुर्धर्मो धारयते प्रजाः ।

(*Mahābhārata Karṇa Parva* 69. 58)

यतोऽभ्युदयनिःश्रेयससिद्धिः स धर्मः ।
धर्मेति धारणे धातुर्महत्त्वे चैवमुच्यते ॥

(*Vaiśeṣika Sutra)*

आधारणे महत्त्वे वा धर्मः स तु निरुच्यते ॥

(*Matsya Purāṇa)*

धर्मो विश्वस्य जगतः प्रतिष्ठा ।

(*Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* XXII. 1)

धर्मसारमिदं जगत् ।

(*Vālmīki* III. 9. 30)

प्रभवार्थं च भूतानां धर्मप्रवचनं कृतम् ।

(*Mahābhārata Karṇa Parva* 69.56)

अहिंसार्थं च भूतानां धर्मप्रवचनं कृतम् ।

(*Mahābhārata Śānti Parva* 109.12)

धर्मार्थावुच्यते श्रेयः कामार्थौ धर्म एव च ।
अर्थ एवेह वा श्रेयस्त्रिवर्ग इति तु स्थितिः ॥

(*Manusmṛti* II. 224)

धर्मार्थकामात्मकः परस्पराविरुद्धः त्रिवर्ग एव पुरुषार्थतया श्रेयः इति विनिश्चयः ।

× × × × ×

तस्माद् धर्मप्रधानेन भवितव्यं यतात्मना ।

(*Mahābhārata Śānti Parva* 167.9)

The term religion has been explained by the critics deriving it from the verb Religare i.e., 'to bind together'. In this sense religion is 'a bond of piety'. Religion and morality are closely

2. See P.V. Kāṇe—*History of the Dharmaśāstras* (Section I.p.1—4).

related and complementry to each other. All religions differing on metaphysical and epistemological problems agree with one another on the moral and ethical grounds. The code of spiritual and devotional conduct in almost all religions oriental or occidental is often wonderfully similar. The *Sanātana Dharma* has always been emphasising the spiritual enlightenment, the social progress and the moral uprightness of the people of the world with the noble ideal—"कृण्वन्तो विश्वमार्यम्" and "वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्". No other religion than the *Sanātana Dharma* has prayed for the welfare of one and all irrespective of country caste, colour and creed—

सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः।
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चिद् दुःखभाग्भवेत्॥

× × × × × ×

स्वस्त्यस्तु विश्वस्य खलः प्रसीदतां
ध्यायन्तु भूतानि शिवं मिथो धिया।

(*Bhāgavata* V. 18.9)

स्वस्ति प्रजाभ्यः परिपालयन्तां
न्याय्येन मार्गेण महीं महीशाः।
गोब्राह्मणेभ्यः शुभमस्तु नित्यं
लोका समस्ताः सुखिनो भवन्तु॥

(*Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*)

In the words of Dr. S. Rādhākṛṣṇan—"Religion is the discipline which touches the conscience and helps us to struggle with evil and sordidness, saves us from greed, lust and hatred, releases moral power and imparts courage in the enterprize of saving the world."[3] In this way we can say that religion helps in stabilizing social order by enforcing uniformity of behaviour and by strengthening social solidarity. It teaches men to obey the social laws, to have respect and sympathy for others to discharge their social, political and domestic obligations, to develop love and fellow-feeling and serve humanity. This is why Swāmī Vivekānanda said—"In building up character, in making for

3. *Religion and Society* (Allen and Unwin, London p. 42. 1947).

everything that is good and great, in bringing peace to others and peace to one's own self, religion is the highest motive power and therefore, ought to be studied from that stand-point."[4]

Keeping in mind these domestic, social, humanistic and spiritual functions of religion, the teachers and preachers of the *Sanātana Dharma* advised the people to hold to religion by all means. They warned them not to leave religion even on the pains of death.

न जातु कामान्न भयान्न लोभाद्
धर्मं त्यजेज्जीवितस्यापि हेतोः ।
नित्यो धर्मः सुखदुःखे त्वनित्ये
जीवो नित्यो हेतुरस्य त्वनित्यः ॥

(*Mahābhārata Svargārohaṇa* 5. 63)

नाहं कामान्न संरम्भान्न द्वेषान्नार्थकारणात् ।
न हेतुवादाल्लोभाद् वा धर्मं जह्यां कथञ्चन ॥

(*Mahābhārata Udyoga Parva* 91.24)

× × × × × ×

धर्म एव हतो हन्ति धर्मो रक्षति रक्षितः ।

The Fundamental Tenets—

The *Sanātana Dharma* which pervades and impregnates all religions, sects and creeds of the world in one form or the other, is an all-embracing, all assimilating, all absorbing and all unifying faith. This universal religion is recognised from the following fundamental tenets and traditions—

1. The institutions of the *Varṇas* and the *Āśramas*—called *Varṇāśrama Dharma*.

2. The conception of the ultimate substance the God almighty worshipped by various people in various forms and names. All later religious scriptures like the Koran or the Bible. They owe to this original, conception for their description of God. The '*la ilāhā illallāha*' of the Koran means 'एकं ब्रह्म द्वितीयो नास्ति' and '*lā ibtidā lā intihā*' of the Koran have come from 'नान्तो न चादि'. The 'अनलहक' points out to its origin in 'अहं ब्रह्मास्मि' and 'सोऽहम्'. The *Sanātana Dharma* has allowed one and all to worship God in any name and form—

4. *Jñānayoga* p. 15-16 (Advaita Āśrama Calcutta).

यं शैवाः समुपासते शिव इति ब्रह्मेति वेदान्तिनो
बौद्धा बुद्ध इति प्रमाणपटवः कर्तेति नैयायिकाः ।
अर्हन्नित्यथ जैनशासनरताः कर्मेति मीमांसकाः
सोऽयं नो विदधातु वाञ्छितफलं त्रैलोक्यनाथो हरिः ॥
यं ब्रह्मावरुणेन्द्ररुद्रमरुतः स्तुन्वन्ति दिव्यैः स्तवै-
र्वेदैः साङ्गपदक्रमोपनिषदैर्गायन्ति यं सामगाः ।
ध्यानावस्थिततद्गतेन मनसा पश्यन्ति यं योगिनो
यस्यान्तं न विदुः सुरासुरगणा देवाय तस्मै नमः ॥
विष्णुर्वा त्रिपुरान्तको भवतु वा ब्रह्मा सुरेन्द्रोऽथवा
भानुर्वा शशलक्षणोऽथ भगवान् बुद्धोऽथ सिद्धोऽथवा ।
रागद्वेषविषार्तिमोहरहितः सत्त्वानुकम्पोद्यतो
यः सर्वैः सह संस्कृतः गुणगणैः तस्मै नमः सर्वदा ॥

The above mentioned words describing God almighty—the omnipotent,omnipresent and omniscient may be very easily applied to the father Abraham of the Hebrews or the Allāha of the Mohammedans or the God of the Christians. Any power devoid of such noble qualities cannot be even a god, what to speak the God almighty !

3. The concept of the four *Puruṣārthas*—and the five *Kleśas*—'*Avidyā, Asmitā, Rāga, Dveṣa* and *Abhiniveśa.*'

4. The concepts of the heaven and hell (These concepts also are universal and are found even in the scriptures of ancient Egypt, the *Bible* and the *Koran*).

5. The three ways of *Karmayoga, Jñānayoga* and *Bhaktiyoga* as detailed in the *Bhagavadgītā.*

6. *The Pañcamahāyajñas* and the three *Ṛṇas*—'ऋषि ऋण, देव ऋण, पितृ ऋण'.

7. The significance of the *Tīrthas,* pilgrimages; religious baths at sacred places, rivers and *Sarovaras, Parvas,* penances, festivals, fairs.

8. The spirit of respecting and honouring all peoples, all faiths and sects (सर्वधर्म समादर).

9. Observance of 'सामान्यमानवधर्म जीवदया धर्म'—

धृतिः क्षमा दमोऽस्तेयं शौचमिन्द्रिय निग्रहः ।
धीर्विद्या सत्यमक्रोधो दशकं धर्म लक्षणम् ॥

(Manusmṛti)

इज्याध्ययनदानानि तपः सत्यं धृतिः क्षमा ।
अलोभ इति मार्गोऽयं धर्मस्याष्टविधः स्मृतः ।।

(Pañcatantra Mitralābha)

10. *Varṇa Dharma, Āśrama Dharma, Varṇāśrama Dharma, Sādhāraṇa Dharma, Yuga Dharma, Āpad Dharma, Nimitta Dharma.* The *Sanātana* Hindus living in every nook and corner of this world on the both sides of the Atlantic, are recognised by their obedience and spiritual attachment to the above mentioned tenets of their *Dharma*.

The *Sanātana Dharma* gives full religious freedom to its followers. There is no room for any narrow-mindedness, fanaticism, sectarian intolerance and communal disharmony. This is the oldest religion of the world, far older than the Egyptian and the Greek which are endebted to it in all spheres. They owe their thoughts and principles; ideas and ideals to the *Sanātana Dharma*. All the best in the thought system of the west has gone there from the east. A few examples will suffice. Prof. E. J. Urwick concludes in his book *The Message of Plato*, that Plato borrowed the philosophical and social ideas found in his Dialogues, from the *Sanātana* sources. "The so-called four estates of European History, so clearly recognised in the 18th century correspond so well to the four great castes of India", says L. F. Ward in his article *Social Classes and Sociological Theory* (Ajos: Vol. 8. p. 127-128). The well-known essay of Bacon '*Of Studies*' emphasising the virtues and aims of education, is based on the borrowed ideas from the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XI. 5. 7. 1). The famous convocation speech on human values, beginning with 'सत्यं वद, धर्मं चर' etc., found in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad (Śikṣā Vallī* 9) may be found at many places in the *Bible* or the *Koran* or the *Avestā* in fragments and revised renderings. The famous metaphor of soul as charioteer and senses as horses *Kaṭhopaniṣad* (I. 3. 3-4) finds place in '*The Pheadrus*' of Plato without any change.

This is sufficient to prove the antiquity and the validity of the *Sanātana Dharma*. Its tenets are eternal and everlasting. Its principles are all-embracing. It has the unique power of

maintaining peace and harmony in the world disturbed and confused by the regional and racial wars, communal and sectarian fanaticism and the giant global terrorism devouring great men like Martin Luther King, John F. Kennedy, Mahātmā Gāndhī, Indirā Gāndhī, Rājīva Gāndhī and Rāma Singh Premadāsa. The *Sanātana Dharma* has survived all other religions by dint of its valid tenets. It has seen many ups and downs, degenerations and revivals. It is now going to enjoy its new renaissance. But the *Sanātanīs* should always be aware of the dangers of the western materialism and dry secularism. I conclude this article on the *Sanātana Dharma* with the stern warning given by Swāmī Vivekānanda to all of us who are proud of our culture.

"There are two great obstacles on our path in India the scylla of old orthodoxy and the charybdis of modern European civilization. Of these two I vote for the old orthodoxy and not for the Europeanised system."

(*Complete Works* p. 21)

Under the influence of knowledge gained by the sense-organs one regards the visible world as true, beautiful and capable of giving pleasures, and so one naturally gets attracted towards it. But in the light of thought one begins to have doubt about the existence of world, its beauty and its capability of giving pleasure. The effect of following the guidance of *Viveka* is that one discords association with the visible world. It is important to attach great significance to *Viveka* in human life because without this the conflicts of life are not resolved. Attraction of the world does not let the individual rise above body consciousness. Even though one has to undergo unbearable sufferings of repeated births and deaths on regarding oneself as the body, the individual does not give up the craving for bodily pleasures by allowing the mind to function under the influence of sense-organs rather than the guidance of *Viveka.* One is obliged to give up pleasure but one does not willingly give up the craving for pleasure.

—*Revelation of The Spiritual Path*

Sanātana Dharma—Restated

—Judge Swami Sri Bipinchandranand Saraswati

Our *Sanātana Dharma* has since independence, been subjected to a lot of floggings and distortions. This has resulted in Hindus, losing pride in their hereditary religion and its practice, so much so that generally people feel guilty and ashamed of calling themselves Hindus, lest they be dubbed as communal or non-secular. Hence there is a pressing need to restate its principles.

Definitions of Sanātana Dharma—

Sanātana means ancient and beginningless hence endless and eternal. It certainly does not connote old, tottering, obsolete and unsuitable to modern conditions, as is often doled out.

The word *Dharma* has a wide variety of meanings. It includes nature, properties, virtue, righteousness, duty, law, usage, custom, religious inclinations and observance of prescribed course of good conduct, some basis which holds etc. When a devout Hindu uses the expression, he understands it to be the experiences of the great seers of the truth who have laid down rules of worship and conduct to attain peace, happiness and prosperity on the earth and salvation in the life after death, thereby fulfilling the four *Puruṣārthas* (goals) of *Dharma, Artha, Kāma* and *Mokṣa*. If this connotation is properly appreciated, there will be absolutely no ground for castigating the Hindu religion which unfolds a beautiful blend of unity in diversity.

Essentials of Sanātana Dharma—

(1) The first essential is a firm belief in the existence of life after death, rebirth and transmigration of souls.

(2) Secondly, consciousness of a sentient and all-pervading eternal principle of life which may be (a) *Saguṇa Nirākāra (b) Nirguṇa Nirākāra* or (c) *Saguṇa Sākāra* i.e. (a) formless with attributes, (b) formless and attributeless (c) both with form and

attributes. The last two conceptions are peculiar to *Sanātana Dharma* and their utility depends on mental grasp and spiritual persuasions of individuals.

(3) Pañca Deva Upāsanā—

The elements formed out of the first material cause, *Prakṛti* (nature) and its adjuncts are *Ākāśa, Vāyu, Agni, Jala* and *Pṛthvī* (i. e. space, air, fire, water and earth). Their presiding deities are respectively Viṣṇu, Sun, Bhagawatī, Gaṇeśa and Śaṅkara. Out of them, or their various versions or manifestations one or more have to be selected by every Hindu for worship according to his aptitude and traditions.

(4) Pañca Mahāyajña—

Bhūta, Manuṣya, Pitṛ, Deva and *Brahma Yajñas,* that is to say feeding animals, birds and human beings as well as making offerings to ancestors, spiritual deities and spiritual preceptors.

(5) Varṇa and Āśrama—

The discipline of the four *Varṇas* and four *Āśramas,* namely—*Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas,* and *Śūdras,* and *Brahmacarya, Gṛhastha, Vānaprastha* and *Saṁnyāsa.*

(6) Pañca Mahāvrata—

Satya, Ahiṁsā, Brahmacarya, Asteya and *Aparigraha,* that is to say truth, non-violence, continence, non-stealing and non-accumulation. They have to be followed to the extent ordained for each individual or class. Besides the foregoing *Yamas* which are *Mahā Vratas* (Supreme vows), there are five *Niyamas* i. e. rules of conduct namely *Śauca, Santoṣa, Tapaḥ, Swādhyāya* and *Devārādhana* i. e. cleanliness and purity, contentment, austerity, study, and worship of God. Their detailed application varies for different individuals and classes, Ten characteristics of *Dharma* laid down by Manu can also be classified under one or the other above headings.

(7) No Disrespect to the Vedas—

The *Vedas* are a treasure house of universal knowledge, intended for all times and all men all over the world. Necessarily in any given situation, only a part of it will be applicable to us, while the rest ensures for the benefit of other known or unknown beings.

Hence the injunction, "Follow what applies but never show any disrespect to the *Vedas.*"

I wish I could dwell at length on each of the above essentials, but for the present I shall confine myself to the most maligned of them viz., the *Varṇa-Vyavasthā* (caste arrangement).

Varṇa Vyavasthā—

For the efficient working and attaining peace, happiness and prosperity, it is essential that the society of rational human beings be organised by division of labour in well-defined spheres of duties. Without it, there would be a mess, in case everybody preferred the same duty and nobody to do the rest. Suppose everybody adopted the profession of teaching, who will be the taught and who will produce the necessary finances, to make building and library and arrange for cleaning and furniture, Surely, somebody is equally needed to do all the rest.

In the army, the generals and brigadiers are the thinkers—they seldom fire a shot in the battle. Their offices are full of maps, sketches, plans and various electric gadgets. They do the task of planning strategy and giving orders and are mainly engrossed in the mental work of thinking.

The Colonels and Lt. Colonels are assigned the task of making arrangements for ordnance depots, stores, weapons, ammunitions, vehicles, tents, food and other supplies. They can be compared with traders or stockists. It is the Majors, the Lieutenants and the like, who have to do the actual fighting at the front and advance and defeat the enemy. They can be compared with warriors. Broadly, the privates have to do service to other officers and perform other labour duties like cleaning, cooking, carrying loads and also do the fighting, as may be ordered from time to time. This division of labour has been found to be natural, convenient and universal and it operates, in communist as well as capitalist countries all over the world. By whatsoever name called, they constitute thinkers, warriors, traders and workmen having well-defined duties.

Let us take an example. Supposing, we wish to establish a new office. We shall presently need an officer to think, plan and give

orders, a clerk to keep and arrange files, furniture and stationary, an Inspector to execute orders besides peons to clean the office, carry the files, post letters and perform other menial duties. Again, the division falls in the aforesaid four categories.

To take an instance of a Judge of which the writer has some experience. Duty of a Judge is to interpret and lay down the law given by the law-giver and to apply it to the established facts of case and deliver an operative judgement. This involves a painstaking process of vast studies and deep thinking for not a small time. To facilitate the process, he is assisted by a Reader (Court Master or Bench Clerk) who arranges and furnishes the relevant files, law books and necessary stationary to the Judge. There is further assistance from peons and Jamādāras who look after the Judge and attend to all menial works. In addition, there is a process-serving establishment, which serves and enforces the orders and decrees of the Judge. The division is again fourfold with well defined duties. Can it be contended that the Judge should, interrupting his thinking process, himself perform these other duties and personally execute his orders for arrest, detention, eviction or demolition ? Surely not.

The conclusion is that in any organised society, there must be division of labour called by whatsoever name. Our ancient *Ṛṣis* called them Brahmins, *Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas* and *Śūdras* and neatly defined their duties. They had an allegory for it *(Puruṣa-Sūkta* No.11 and Manu I.31) that a Brahmin (thinker) was born out of head of the first creator Brahmā, *Kṣatriya* (warrior), out of his arms, *Vaśya* (trader) out of hips and thigh and the *Śudras* (workmen) out of feet. We need not be allergic to any particular name, but the realities must be appreciated dispassionately. One scholar finding the aforesaid division scientific and wholesome, prefers to give it new names namely, Spiritual power, Political power, Economic power and Man power.

This leads us to the most debated question whether the division of labour or castes should be based on birth or vocation. After careful studies, I have personally formed an opinion that the criterion should be both. A Brahmin who does not perform his

duties of *Sandhyā Vandana, Yajña, Swādhyāya* and *Dāna* is denoted a *Brahma Bandhu* or a *Kṣatriya Bandhu*, as the case may be. Rāvaṇa though born a Brahmin was on account of his misdeeds called a *Rākṣasa* and his effigy is still burnt every year. Should birth be at all taken into consideration ?

Modern science has well-established the value of genes and heredity. Children of parents, suffering from diabetes or heart diseases are more prone to be afflicted by them. On the other hand, experience has shown that a son adopting his father's vocation, picks up its intricacies and efficiency much more readily and is likely to be more successful, whether the vocation consists of priesthood,trade, carpentry, lawyer, teaching or any other. It looks strange that our leaders rush to apply the rule of birth to dynasties of political leaders but decry its application to other valuable vocations.

Moreover, purity of blood and breed has a very important factor to play in life. To take an instance I was informed that a good shepherd dog of pure German breed costs as high as Rs.50000/–; and the police dogs even in India are, in order to ensure their intelligence, courage and efficiency fed, mated, housed and trained separately from all other dogs. Breed again, plays an important role in the selection of animals like horses and elephants, besides various plants. So, how much more valuable it is for the human beings.

Our ancients found the importance of purity of blood and breed and they concluded that birth is a more certain and infallible criterion in determining castes than mere present vocation. According to them, the present birth is a result of good and bad deeds performed in past lives; and the choice of parents in this life by providence is part of that eternal plan. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in *Gītā* (4—13) that He has created the four castes according to their deeds and qualities. Whether this is acceptable or not, but the alternative of ignoring birth altogether and reliance only on present vocation to determine the caste is fraught with grave dangers. For example it is difficult to lay down the standard criterion for correct categorisation in one or the other castes.

Secondly, who will be the impartial judge to do so and will he, lastly, have all the relevant, apparent and hiden material of the candidate for the purpose before him, unless he be omniscient. Should these factors be ignored, we shall be faced with the funny spectacle of a Chief Minister constituting his favourite *Harijanas* as four new Śaṅkarācāryas and make a mockery of the high office. Hence, in my opinion both birth and vocation should be taken into consideration.

Can caste be improved or changed ? The answer is yes, in exceptional cases, it can be. But the process requires exemplary character, austerity of a high order, intense devotion to God and remarkable spiritual progress. Possession of large conchs of money, or chunks of land or high mundane education or occupation of a high political office are not of much value in the philosophy of *Sanātana Dharma.* There is a well-known instance of *Rājarṣi* Viśwāmitra becoming a *Brahmarṣi.* Again Cetā Camāra, Nandā Nāī, Dhannā Jāta amongst others, are fondly remembered and greatly respected. Besides *Ālvāra* saints of the South command extremely high respect from all castes and sections of the society and it is on record that from Guru Ravidāsa and *Kṣatriya* King Aśvapati, even the Brahmins by birth took their lessons. So to change or improve the caste, spiritual progress is necessary and not the preponderance of mundane acquisitions. There is a relevant verse in the *Mahābhārata Anuśāsana Parva* (Chapter 15 verse 16 and 17) where sage Viśwāmitra discloses that he was born a *Kṣatriya* but by the grace of God has become a valued Brahmin.

The last and the most important question relates to much publicised intercaste hatred. It can be categorically stated that in *Sanātana Dharma* there is absolutely no place for hatred. The injunction is, "Hate the Sin, not the sinner." The *Gītā* (Chapter 5 verse 18) requires one to have the same true insight into a cow, elephant, dog, Cāṇḍāla and a pious Brahmin. Every human being has the same spark of divine spirit and similarly framed physical body. The division of labour enjoins purity, cleanliness and love but not hatred. In a physical body, how can a head or arm hate

the abdomen or the feet which perform essential services ? A thorn in the feet, causes as much pain and requires as quick a relief as headache. Still one's own feet and not the head (unless specifically necessary) need to be washed before entering the worship-room. The scriptures cast a duty upon thinkers to think for the welfare of the entire community and upon the *Vaiśyas* to spend their accumulated wealth to maintain all the other castes as well as *Āśramas* and so on. Even a Brahmin performing *Sandhyā Vandana* on the bank of a river has a duty to jump and save a *Harijana* child from drowning, though he needs another bath to resume his worship.

It is the rules relating to purity and cleanliness, particularly those dealing with interdining and intermarriage which being most misunderstood, have led to false propaganda. It is not appreciated that a pious Brahmin cannot eat the cooked food which has been touched by his beloved child or his dear wife in menses. Can it be suggested that he hates the darling of his heart the child and the wife ? I had an eminent Hindu lawyer friend who was a non-vegetarian at home but he never took meat outside his house, for fear of contamination. Similarly, a Muslim Judge, a confirmed non-vegetarian, took only vegetarian food outside his house for a similar scruple. But nobody ever whispered that they hated their friends who offered them non-vegetarian dishes which they did not accept. In my opinion rules of interdining and intermarriage should be best left to individual tastes, circumstances, traditions and beliefs and they should not be enforced or prohibited by either law or society. As a matter of fact, we in the modern generation have unfortunately become so lax in our food and marriage habits that we look down upon any body who wants to observe rules of purity and cleanliness in these matters and does not fall in line with the general society.

In reality untouchability has been abolished by Article 17 of the Constitution and its practice and propagation have been made a criminal offence. As law-abiding citizens we must follow the law in letter and spirit. Hence there is absolutely no scope for its practice in public life, in trains, buses, schools, public places,

Govt. offices etc. But there is nothing to prevent us from having a bath and change of clothes on returning home (irrespective of the fact whether or not we have touched any good or bad person or thing), and then enter our worship room or take food according to our taste and habits. There is no ban on our following rules of purity and cleanliness in our private life but there never was, nor is at present any scope for hatred or looking down upon anybody performing his ordained duties.

Be it, as it may, there is absolutely no cause or justification for intercaste hatred or practice of untouchability, loyalty and care and with due regard to the welfare and progress of all the limbs of the society without the least rancour or hatred. This is the great *Sanātana Dharma*. Let us appreciate and hallow it and follow and apply it sensibly in modern circumstances with prudence and courage and with faith in God and our enlightened ancient seers.

May we end this article with a light anecdote. Once a lawyer was vehemently arguing a legal point before a Judge, who was adamant and not agreeing with the lawyer's point of view. To show firmness of his conviction, the Judge observed "Mr. Lawyer, if that be the law as you state, I will burn all my law books." The lawyer retorted "Read them my Lord,please read them; Do not burn them."

The same advice will be useful for our countrymen. Our scriptures should not be decried or burnt but should be read and carefully studied and their true import be dispassionately realised. This will lead to harmony and solidarity of the nation without any hatred or breach of law and we will regain our lost values.

The sky, the wind, the fire, the water, the earth, the various luminaries, the points of the compass, the trees etc., the rivers, the oceans, and each one of the myriad creatures constitute the body of the Lord. One should bow to them all without distinction, looking upon them as God Himself.

Dharma—As Depicted in Vedas

—*Dr. A. R. Panduranga Rao*

The term *Dharma* is associated with religion, though it refers to righteousness, morality, piety etc. *Sanātana Dharma* means the 'Eternal Religion'. 'The Ancient Law' based on the *Vedas*.

वेदोऽखिलो धर्ममूलं स्मृतिशीले च तद्विदाम् ।
आचारश्चैव साधूनामात्मनस्तुष्टिरेव च ॥

(*Manusmṛti* II. 6)

"The whole of the *Veda* is the source of *Dharma,* also the *Smṛti* and the character of those that know the *Veda,* also the conduct of the good and the satisfaction of the Self." From the point of view of etymology, the term *Dharma* is derived from the root *Dhṛ* to sustain, to bear, to hold. *Dharma* is thus a sustainer or protector.

ध्रियते लोकोऽनेन, धरति लोकं वेति धर्मः ।

"The world is sustained or held by this *Dharma* or this sustains the world." This points to *Dharma* as the All-sustainer. Lord Vedavyāsa in his *Mahābhārata* has the same idea portrayed in the following verse.

धारणाद्धर्म इत्याहुः धर्मो धारयते प्रजाः ।
यत् स्याद्धारणसंयुक्तं स धर्म इति निश्चयः ॥

"Because it sustains, it is called *Dharma. Dharma* sustains the subjects. That is certainly called *Dharma,* which is associated with sustenance."

This sustenance implies a fall for that, which is to be sustained. It further implies that there is another, which holds back that which is liable to fall. It naturally follows from this that it is *Dharma* which holds back the one liable to fall. The question arises—"What is it that is liable to fall ?"

बालादेकमणीयस्कमुतैकं नेव दृश्यते ।
ततः परिष्वजीयसी देवता सा मम प्रिया ॥

(*Atharva Veda* X. 8. 25)

"One that is more subtle than a hair, and another appears as if it does not exist and yet another—the divine force different from these two but yet pervading these two, is dear to me."

Here we find a reference to three entities. One is very subtle and is far more subtle than a tiny particle of a hair. Another is yet more subtle than the first. It creates an impression as if it does not exist—thus signifying its most subtle character. And the third is the superlatively subtler than the other two and that is the divine force, which pervades the first two.

The first subtle entity is the atom i.e., matter. The next is *Jīvātmā,* who is more subtle than the atom. The third viz., God is superlatively subtler than the first two and that is the divine force, which pervades the other two (matter and *Jīva).* From the point of view of time, all the three are eternal and have no end. There was not a time in the past when these three did not exist, nor in the present nor in the future. Atom is subtle. *Jīva* is more subtle and God is superlatively subtle. These three are designated as *Sat, Sat-Cit,* and *Sat-Cit-Ānanda* respectively. *Sat* is common to all the three and hence none among the three can ever be false. *Cit* (intelligence) is common to *Jīva* and God. They cannot therefore be transmuted into matter. *Ānanda* (pure bliss) which is absent in the first two matter and *Jīva* is in unparallelled measure in God. It will be easy, therefore, to identify among the three, that which is susceptible to fall. This falling down must be understood not from the physical point of view, but from the metaphysical point of view. To attain to a higher status or to be condemned to the nether world denotes the rise or fall respectively. Since matter is insentient and has no knowledge and experience, its attaining to a higher status—if at all it can go up to such a higher status, which is impossible, will not confer any happiness nor its falling down lead to misery. The third entity viz., God has pervasion but not the inexperiencing pervasion, which the insentient space has. God, just like the second entity i.e., *Jīva* being a sentient, has knowledge. God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent and is all-pervasive. Hence God's fall is ruled out. Thus the remaining entity *Jīva* alone, who is *Sat-Cit-Rūpa* that is susceptible to rise or fall.

God is praised by the *Ṛgvedic* hymn as full of bliss and not subject to any transmutation.

पावकशोचिषम्   हृद्भिर्मन्द्रेभिरीमहे ।

(*Ṛgveda* VIII. 43. 31)

"We praise with our heart filled with *Ānanda—Paramātmā,* who is the very embodiment of *Ānanda,* the dearest, all pervasive and who is the all-purifying reservoir of radiance, whereas *Jīvātmā* is declared as circumscribed and atomic, vide *Ṛgveda* (VII. 33.6) 'परिच्छिन्ना भरता अर्भकासः'. Limited and atomic (monadic) are the *Jīvas,* who have bodies. "This limitation relates to spatial restriction i.e., confinement to a particular place and also to *Jīva's* limited knowledge and limited prowess, since these happen to be the very characteristics of *Jīva,* which are responsible for his happiness, sorrow, subjection to bondage. *Jīva* is liable to rise and fall.

Ṛgvedic hymn (I. 164. 31) gives a graphic account of *Jīva's* disposition.

अपश्यं गोपायनिपद्यमान मा च परा च पथिभिश्चरन्तम् ।
सध्रीचीः स विषूचीर्वसान आ वरीवर्ति भुवनेष्वन्तः ॥

"I see *Jīva,* who is immortal and eternal who protects the sense-organs and speech and who is coming this side by different routes and is proceeding that way. He bears the body with upright gait and the same *Jīva* bears the body of a quadruped and traverses the different regions."

This characteristic embodiment relates to *Jīva.* The matter and God are not subject to this kind of transmigration, rise and fall, and hence *Dharma* is absolutely essential for the *Jīva* to be held back from falling down. This factor emphasises that *Jīva* can never aspire to be *Brahma* nor was he ever *Brahma* in the past and he is not Brahma now. 'दिवो धर्मन् धरुणे' (*Ṛgveda* V. 15. 2) commands mankind to follow *Dharma* the protege of the great protector God, lest it fall down.

The elevating force is *Dharma* and it is an aggregate of good conduct. While bad conduct or vice always remains bad, in certain circumstances even good conduct is likely to turn out into a sin. To avoid such contingencies, *Vedas* have divided *Dharma* into three divisions.

'ऋतं चिकित्व ऋतमिच्चिकिद्ध्यृतस्य'

(*Ṛgveda* V. 12. 2)

"Know Satya (God)."

'अर्चत प्रार्चत नरः प्रियमेधासो अर्चत'

(*Sāma Veda* 362)

"Praise, engage in worship."

'कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेत्'

(*Yajurveda* 40. 2)

"By doing *Karma,* one should desire to live."

They beckon mankind to engage in acquiring knowledge, in worship and doing deeds, when these three constitute the life breath of *Jīva,* he becomes subdued. The manifestation of the full and real personality of *Jīva* is possible only after the blossoming of the inner self.

त्रिभिः पवित्रैरपुपोद्ध्यर्कं हृदा मतिं ज्योतिरनु प्रजानन्।
वर्षिष्ठं रत्नमकृत स्वधामिरादिद् द्यावापृथिवी पर्यपश्यत्॥

(*Ṛgveda* II. 26. 8)

"By following sincerely the Lord of great splendour and acquiring knowledge in a lofty manner, thereby dispelling the onslaught on the *Ātmā* through mental, verbal and bodily purifications, can the self be sanctified through knowledge, *Upāsanā* (worship) and deeds and realise through self-elevating conduct that transcendental Supreme Being, who bestows happiness and peace on all in abundant measure. It is only after realizing the Supreme Self through sincere devotion, knowledge and unsullied deeds does he *(Jīva)* comprehend fully the world here and yonder.

ब्रह्मणा ते ब्रह्मयुजा युनज्मि हरी सखाया सधमाद आशू।
स्थिरं रथं सुखमिन्द्राधितिष्ठन्प्रजानन् विद्वाँ उपयाहि सोमम्॥

(*Atharvaveda* XX.86. 1)

"The above *Atharva Veda* passage calls to attention the *Jīva* with the sense-organs and tells him—"I will link you to the Godhead through *Vedajñāna,* which is associated with God and I will connect you with the fleeting intellect and mind, which are

very close to you and which dispel all grief. By mounting the steady and joyful body-chariot and acquiring the worldly and spiritual knowledge, reach Him who is the very essence of the cosmos of sentient and insentient."

Thus, in order to secure the worldly and spiritual attainments, there is need to adhere to the threefold means viz., knowledge, *Upāsanā* and *Karma*. The outcome will certainly be the sustenance of good conduct—*Dharma*. In this *Vaidika Dharma* there is no room for narrow-mindedness nor distinction of one's self and others. This *Dharma* is the means for the worldly and otherworldly excellences and glory and never can a *Dhārmika* be an enemy of anybody else.

दृते दृंह मा मित्रस्य मा चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूतानि समीक्षन्ताम्।
मित्रस्याहं चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूतानि समीक्षे। मित्रस्य चक्षुषा समीक्षामहे ॥

(*Yajurveda* 36. 18)

"Oh, Lord of steadiness, make me steady. Let all living beings see me with friendly attitude. I will view all living beings with friendly affection. Let us all look at each other with friendly kindliness." "This universal kindliness is the hallmark of *Dharma*. The words *Mitra, Sakhā* also signify the ennobling quality of friendliness. The term *Mitra* denotes a wonderful conception. Its etymological derivation is 'मेद्यति स्निह्यति स्निह्यते वा स मित्रः'. It refers to one joined to another in intimacy and attachment marked by transcendental love, sharing mutually each other's happiness and sorrow. There are many who pray to God as their father and their mother but it is only the followers of the *Vaidika Dharma*, who reckon him and the gods as their *Mitra*.

'देवो देवानामसि मित्रो अद्भुतो'

(*Ṛgveda* I. 94. 13)

"Oh lustrous flame ! Thou art a wonderful friend."

'अग्ने सख्ये मा रिषामा वयं तव'

(*Ṛgveda* I. 94. 1)

"Oh flame ! Let us be in your friendship and thus be away from destruction."

'सख्ये त इन्द्र वाजिनो मा भेम शवसस्पते'

(*Ṛgveda* I. 11. 2)

"Oh all powerful Lord of strength ! Let us be in your friendship, be endowed with knowledge and be free from fear."

'सखायस्त इन्द्र विश्वह स्याम'

(*Ṛgveda* VII. 21. 9)

"Oh Supreme Lord ! Let us be your friends always."

'सखायस्त्वा ववृमहे'

(*Ṛgveda* III. 9. 1)

"We select you as our friend *(Agni).*"

Ṛgveda (I. 71. 10) also speaks of the comradeship between gods and human beings.

मा नो अग्ने सख्या पित्र्याणि प्रमर्षिष्ठा अभि विदुष्कविः सन्।

"Oh fire ! Mayst thou not forget our ancient friendship—thou who art turned towards us as the knower and seer."

In these passages, the term *Sakhā* (a synonym of *Mitra)* denotes the mutual friendly relationship between the gods and man, the gods, who do care for the well-being of mankind. The famous words of *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* (III. 1)—

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्त्यनश्नन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति ॥

"Two winged inseparable friends in life and love perch on the same tree—the one eats sweet *Pippala* fruit and the other enjoys the sight without tasting the fruit" declare Lord as the inseparable friend of the *Jīva.* It is the same friendliness that exists between the gods and human beings that is required to be developed among all living creatures, be it the human beings or the other living beings and this friendliness is one aspect of *Dharma.* This act of friendliness may be an utopian conception, when mankind in a large measure displays the natural animal instincts and urges, which are opposed to friendliness. Even if it were possible in the case of individuals to foster friendship, such an idea with regard to human society may be, not merely utopian but absurd and may be undesirable too. The problem therefore is not of total liquidation of these instincts but of circumscribing them, confining them to

certain limits and devising the measures to satisfy them fully to these extents. This is accomplished by the concept of *Dharma* (duty). It is this concept of *Dharma* that teaches the people to control their desires and passions, which are so natural an inheritance of the soul in animal flesh. This belief in duty for duty's sake which the *Vaidika* thought and discipline ingrains in an individual from the very childhood is called *Dharma*. *Dharma* as the conscience of inescapable duty makes a man of an animal, the selfish acquisition and indulgence in sense-satisfaction being common to all creatures. It is for this reason that our ethics employs a very purposeful word *Puruṣārtha* (objectives of human achievement) and in that also it has placed *Dharma* as the first target through loosening of all bonds, and the attainment of complete release is the supreme goal.

Duty should be the corner stone of any social system. If anything aptly deserves to be the unshakable foundation of a social system, it must be the consciousness of duty as understood by the term *Dharma*. Devotion to duty controls the promptings and provocations of egotism and transforms natural competition into a smooth co-operation. Thus in our system of philosophy, it is the duty or *Svadharma* that demands the higher loyalty of an individual or a society.

Manusmṛti (II. 1) defines *Dharma* in the following words—

विद्वद्भिः सेवितः सद्भिर्नित्यमद्वेषरागिभिः ।
हृदयेनाभ्यनुज्ञातो यो धर्मस्तं निबोधत ।।

"Know *Dharma* to be that which is practised by the learned, that lead a moral life, that are free from hatred and which is accepted by their hearts (conscience). This emphasis of eschewal of hatred and being true to conscience is the true message of *Dharma*.

Thus the role of the multifaceted *Dharma* is vital for the progress and development of mankind in its search for that great goal—self-realization, which is but the blessed nature of the soul in all glory and full bloom.

Hindu Religion—The Only Real Religion

—Dr. R. N. Vyas

The term religion implies the institution that unites. Of course a majority of people have forgotten this fact and believe that religion is merely a sect believing in certain rites and rituals certain places of worship and teachers. The result is that the world is flooded with so-called religions. Blind following of traditional thinking does not allow people to think about the real nature of religion.

Religion is essentially a pursuit of the ultimately real which is only one and non-dual. If the real is one and religion is the path of attaining that real, how can there be more than one religions ? Of course, there can be many roads to reach the real. But as the end of the attainment is only one, how can there be any quarrel about the paths ? Only that religion can be called real religion which fulfils this test, this requirement.

If we study Hindu religion, we find that it has the following characteristics which entitle it to be given the nomenclature of the only religion that exists on earth at present.

(1) Basis of Philosophy—

In the west religion has been separated from philosophy. That has reduced their 'religions' to mere faiths. It is accepted that faith is an indispensable ingredient of religion but faith if it is to be creative, must be grounded on philosophy. Philosophy is a logical and synthetic study of the real. If faith is not given the basis of philosophy, it may be mere superstition and may gather destructive dimension. The pages of history are red with blood that has been shed on the pretext of such faiths. People become mad and try to perpetuate cruelties in the name of their misconceived religion. A war lasting for full one hundred years was waged in Europe between the Christians and Muslims on the ground of religion. People sacrificed their valuable lives under the

false impression that they were sacrificing their lives for God and would get heaven. Innumerable buildings and libraries were destroyed in the war. One Muslim fighter used to argue while destroying the non-Muslim libraries:—

If the books in these libraries support Koran, they are superfluous and if they are opposed to Koran, they are anti-Koran. In both the cases they deserve to be destroyed.

Many valuable works which contained ancient wisdom and would have been able to guide human mind were set on fire.

If one believes in God but one does not accept Jesus as God's son, one is condemned as anti-Christian and deserves to be destroyed by the faithful Christians. If one believes in God but does not accept Mohammad as His only messenger, he according to Islam deserves to be condemned as opposer of Muslim faith and merits adequate punishment. But in Hinduism, such conduct is impossible. The *Ṛgveda* declares that one non-dual truth alone has been described through differnt names. The *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma Stotra* describes one thousand names of God. Hindu religion gives every person option to conceive Him in the way he likes. One can worship the image or idol of God. The images may be of sand or mud or copper or gold or of any other metal. But it has been said that for the man of knowledge God is all-pervading. One can worship God through thoughts alone. Mental worship is better than physical worship. The *Bhagavadgītā* declares that one should not scoff at anybody's faith. Everybody has to begin his journey towards attainment of truth from the place and position he holds. The *Nārada Bhakti Sūtra* states that one should not indulge in unwanted discussion and quibbling. Hinduism whose essence lies in the *Upanisads*, the *Bhagavadgītā* and Tulasī's *Rāmacaritamānasa* is thus quite open minded. It believes in helping everybody in his search for truth.

Every philosopher of India has been a man of religion too. There was no gap between his philosophy and religion. Religion has been understood as the faith mirrored in actual conduct. That is why we find that it has been accepted in Hinduism that there are many paths leading to the Supreme. The starting points may be

different, but they all meet when the truth is realized. Just as all rivers running through rough paths ultimately merge in the ocean, in the same way individuals follow different paths suiting their temperaments but ultimately realize the unity. That is why we have in India a host of teachers propagating their unique teachings. But there has been no occasion for any religious conflict.

It is because of this philosophical background that the seer of the *Vaidika* age declares—"Earth is my mother, sky is my father. The entire universe is my family."

I do not know any other religious tradition that is so liberal. Of course, there have been some liberal thinkers in other systems of religion too but their number is so small and they belong to that small group of thinkers who outgrow their religious traditions. But Hindu religious system is free from every limitation. The institutions of castes and discriminations of any kind are foreign to the spirit of Hinduism which believes that the *Brahma* is one and there is no substantial distinction between the individual souls and the *Brahma*. Plurality is a spiritual delusion.

Jesus has taught the gospel of love. If my neighbour slaps me on my left cheek, I should turn my other cheek too to him. This teaching is no doubt good and deserves to be accepted. But it has not been explained why I should do so. The right philosophy for such righteous conduct has not been presented. That philosophy is present in Hinduism alone. That Hindu philosophy influenced R. W. Emerson who wrote under the influence of that philosophy—

If the red slayer thinks he slays
Or if the slain thinks he is slain
They know not well the subtle eyes
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

(2) Ethical Outlook of Life—

Although there are some Western thinkers who would try to assert that there is no place for ethical conduct in Hinduism as the latter holds that the world of plurality is a play of *Māyā* or delusion yet truth is otherwise. Hinduism never neglects the

world. On the other hand, it is full of praise for human body which makes it possible to make an attempt to know the truth. The empirical life is always given due importance. If one looks to the *Ṛgveda*, one shall find that the people of that period prayed for riches, health, prosperity, good family life, peace etc. The *Bhagavadgītā* declares that the ideal of social betterment must be pursued even by a person who has attained the highest truth. Human society and its institutions must be preserved in a sagacious way. Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Vālmīki, Tulasīdāsa all gave worldly life the importance it deserves.

So much importance has been given to the world that God himself takes incarnations to preserve it. It has been declared that society cannot be preserved unless ethical conduct is followed. The *Ṛgveda* tells us about the principle of *Ṛta* that rules the universe. *Dharma* has to be followed not only for the purification of spiritual life, it has to be followed even because of practical ground that in its absence the social fabric shall be shattered. Rāma is worshipped by many people because his life provided an excellent example of ethical excellence. He is called *Maryādā Puruṣottama*.

Hinduism advocates *Adhikārī Bheda* i.e., distinction of abilities in grasping truth. One cannot reach the M. A. class without passing the lower grades. The ideal of the *Brahma* and the principle of *Māyā* are meant for those who have attained capacity of grasping the highest spiritual truth through some inborn capacity of spiritual discipline. Even Śaṅkara has stated that the empirical life is not an empty life. It is not a dream-life or a sleep-life. The critics of Śaṅkara unnecessarily say that according to Śaṅkara the world is just an illusion. Śaṅkara wrote panegyrics of gods, composed many devotional songs, loved his mother. This is sufficient to prove that life had a meaning for Śaṅkara. He always pleaded that one should never follow any teaching blindly. Even if the entire lot of scriptures were to declare that the fire does not burn one should never accept it. God has given enough discretion to every person to ascertain truth of any statement. Disillusionment from the world comes at the end when the ultimate truth is attained and even after that attainment the social life has to be led in a befitting manner. For a person who has realized truth, ethical life is spontaneous.

One does not ask the sun to shed light.

(3) A Systematic Plan for Life—

Far from neglecting life, Hinduism offers systematic plans to regulate individual and social lives.

(a) System of Four Puruṣārthas—

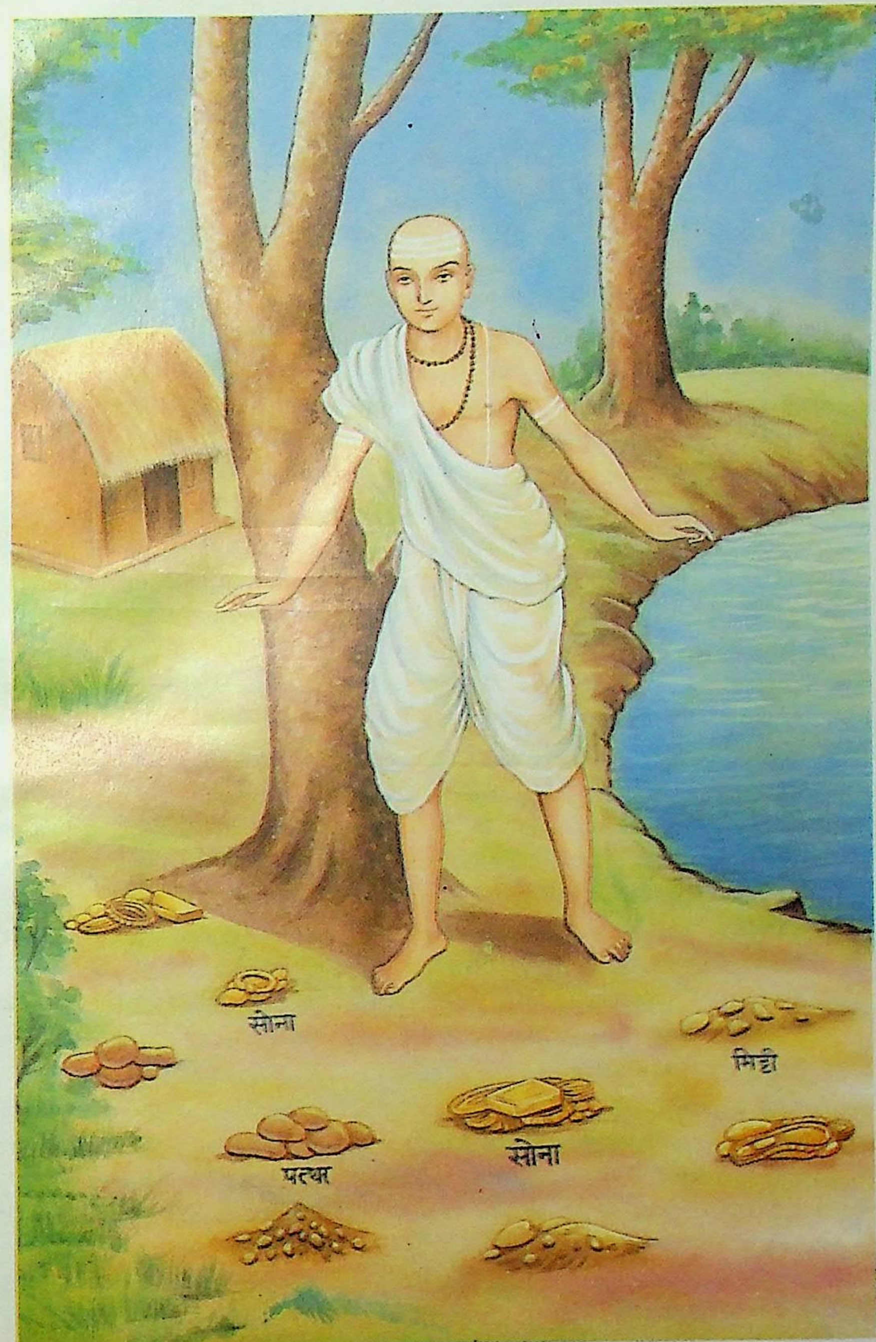
Four ends of life have been suggested viz., *Dharma, Artha, Kāma* and *Mokṣa.* First of all one must learn to lead an ethical life, then he should try to earn money for leading independent and satisfied life; then one should try to satisfy one's worldly desires in a legitimate manner. Desires should not be destroyed in a cruel manner. They should be given desirable direction to move on. Marriage is a way of giving right direction to sex instinct. Marriage may appear to be a personal affair but it has its wider aspects. Family is the leeding ground of society. A good family gives good members to society. Hence marriage is not a contract between two persons that can be broken at any time. It is a sacrament as it is a place where good citizens are given birth and trained. But the ultimate end is salvation. Man is a soul under the garb of man. Unless one realizes the spirit enshrined in body, one cannot assert that he has lived life rightly. *Moksa* or emancipation is the state where one realizes that one is the immortal soul. When one gets this realization he is freed from agonies of births and rebirths. Hence one should try to get this realization. The life that started with the understanding of *Dharma* should end only with the realization of the soul. If money or any other affection of the type comes in the way, it has to be discarded *"ātmānaṁ satataṁ rakṣet dhanairapi sutairapi."*

(b) Four Āśramas—

But individual must get the right training for developing a capacity to attain the supreme end of life. This training is provided by the institutions of *Brahmacarya, Gṛhastha, Vānaprastha* and *Saṁnyāsa.* It is not the place to dwell at length on this point. But it is clear that if individual life is so regulated, it can attain the four objectives of life making the life of individuals and society happy.

(4) Religion Not Linked with Any Prophet or Founder—

In my opinion the fact that Hindu religion is not linked with any specific prophet or founder gives it an entirely unrestricted



Saṁnyāsa Āśrama

outlook. The followers of Christianity and Islāma are linked with their prophets. That makes them restricted. But Hinduism gives due importance to the innumerable seers. We come across every shade of opinion in the domain of Hinduism ranging from the *Cārvākas* to the *Vedāntīs*. In fact Hinduism is a world religion. It is a universal religion which gives every member freedom of accepting the reality in his own way, but also adds that the ultimate real is one. Even freedom to describe God in the light of one's comprehension is permitted—

tava tattvaṁ na jānāmi kīdṛśo'si maheśvara ।
yādṛśo'si mahādeva tādṛśāya namo namaḥ ॥

The widest possible description of the real is *Sat*, *Cit* and *Ānanda,* truth, consciousness and bliss. The real is eternal and everlasting and imperishable. That is why Hinduism is known as *Sanātana Dharma* (religion of the eternal). To be a Hindu is the easiest thing in the world. If you intend to become a Christian you shall have to follow certain rites, and if you are a Muslim you have to accept certain restrictions. But to be Hindu you have just to proclaim that you are a Hindu. No following of any restriction or rite or ritual is needed.

I am sure that the 21st century shall see that a large part of humanity shall become a follower of Hinduism directly or in directly. The fierceness of atomic weapons and the rise of education may compel sensible people to abjure the path of narrowness which leads to conflict and destruction. They shall have to be quite liberal and unrestricted in the domain of religion. This liberalness and unrestrictedness of outlook is the name of Hinduism. The Hindus do not believe in conversion. Hence Hindus shall not be made through conversion. Hinduism shall impel people to accept it because of its broad-mindedness and the faith that happiness results from an open-minded outlook *(yad bhūmā tadeva sukham)*. The world shall learn the secret of universal culture only through Hinduism. There is no other alternative because no other religion can become so free from restrictions, rites, rituals or dogmatism.

The Fundamental Teachings of Zoroastrianism

—Irach J. S. Taraporewala

The *Sanātana Dharma* of the Aryas has had a twofold development—in Iran and in India. In Iran it has received the impress of the great teacher Zarathustra, one of the greatest that came to teach our human race. His teaching is fortunately preserved, more or less as he gave it, in the *Gāthās*. There are differences of opinion about the translating of these ancient verses, but still the fundamental points can be clearly marked out. These are five in number—

1. The absolute supremacy of the one being, who is the creator and the father of all the universe. He is indeed one without a second, the ever-young, always the same. He is given the name of Ahura-Mazda, the parts implying *Sat* and *Cit* and the full name implying the perfect *Sat-Cit-Ānanda*.

2. In the beginning of all manifestation there were two primaeval spirits 'created by Mazda', who are twins and completely opposed to each other in their thoughts, words and deeds. These twin spirits created 'Life' and 'Not Life' in order that 'creation's purpose be fulfilled.' We call them, in our lower world 'The good spirit' and 'The Evil Spirit'. Like the semitic races we, too, have forgotten the essentially divine origin of the Evil spirit and we lose sight of the fact that both are necessary for the fulfilment of God's plan. We may as well call them *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*, or spirit and matter. What we call 'Evil' is essentially of 'matter', hence fleeting and transient. Ultimately it must disappear for everyone of us and be transmuted into good. The

end and aim of all our life is to 'see', 'to approach', and 'to be in loving union' with, the supreme.

3. This is the great charter of spiritual liberty given to mankind. The prophet says in clear words—"Listen with your ears the good teaching I bring, think over it with a clear mind and then let each man decide for himself the choice between the two paths." The two paths are the paths of good and evil. Each man chooses for himself. Man is given the greatest gift of God—his mind, the power of thought. Man is man because he possesses *Manas*. He has to use this and find his way. He has full liberty to choose exactly the path he wants. He has the liberty, if he likes, to go to hell. But there is the fourth fundamental truth—The Law of *Karma*.

4. The Law of Karma—Man is responsible for his acts. The accounts in the book of God make not the slightest mistake. Everything done or not done must be atoned for. Man has his freedom of choice and with it comes the necessary consequence—his full responsibility. The Law of *Karma* is meaningless unless the freedom to act is granted. Man forges his own chains and he alone can break them. "He is his own friend or his own foe." The Law of *Karma* cannot be avoided. Failure after failure shall come but success in the end is absolutely certain. Every soul is promised that for him there is 'the resurrection', the life eternal without any bondage. The reward of evil is long continued affliction. But note that it is not eternal suffering. The greatest 'sinner' on earth has the hope of salvation as soon as he learns his lesson and makes the right choice. The freedom of choice is with him always, if he but 'thinks it over with clear mind.'

5. And to attain this Eternal Peace and freedom the path shown to us by Zarathustra, is the triple one of knowledge, love and service. We usually think of them as three distinct ones, and indeed, if but a single one of them is followed, the final goal cannot be reached. The full harmonious growth of all three is needed for perfection. These three together lead to the realization of the true beauty of the triple *Sat-Cit-Ānanda*. In the human being these correspond to the head, the heart and the hand.

Zarathustra's faith in its latter phases has always striven to keep on this triple path to God. It has always advocated a life of strenuous activity in the world and for the world. The ideal pointed out is ever going out in ever-widening circles of usefulness and service. Thus the best profession for a man is declared to be agriculture, for it helps to sustain a multitude. So also the married man is preferred to an unmarried one and a home with children is deemed more worthy of regard than one without a child. So also five clear stages of ever-widening love and usefulness and service are pointed out. The first is the head of the family, next is the head of the village, then the head of the province and then the head of the land. Last of all comes the head of religion, the spiritual *Guru,* whose love embraces all humanity.

Zoroastrian ideals have always taught us to live in the world and realize God through doing our duties—not the duties of others, but our own. When we fulfil these, we will surely get greater opportunities. The best reward for service is the chance of higher services.

Dharma is a *Saṁskṛta* term with so wide a meaning and application as to cover the entire field of life.

It is derived from the root *Dhṛ,* to hold, maintain, sustain, etc.

As God is the life of all manifested beings and things, God-realization must be objective of *Dharma.*

Different nations in bygone ages have interpreted or defined it from different angles. To Egypt it was purely and simply religion. To Persia it was purity; to Chaldea, science: to Greece, beauty: to Rome, the Law.

But India has summed up all these definitions and aspects in the one comprehensive word: *Dharma. Dharma* is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, it emanates from the divine presence which is its centre, ever unfolding itself in the life of every individual. The differences in *Dharma* are accounted for by the varied stages of unfoldment in each being.

Sanātana Dharma and Hindu Code Bill

Our *Sanātana Dharma* is based on *Vedas* which are not man-made. They are considered as divine breath. They have been revealed to the creator of the universe—Brahmā. Those principles which are laid down in *Vedas* or *Smṛtis*, based on *Vedas* are called *Sanātana Dharma*. The eternal God for the welfare of the beings in this world and hereafter have revealed *Vedas* to govern those beings. 'सनातनस्त्वं पुरुषो मतो मे, *(Gītā* XI. 18) (In my view you are the eternal being). 'जीवभूतः सनातनः' *(Gītā* XV. 7) (the embodied soul is eternal), 'छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि' *(Gītā* XV. 1) (whose leaves are the *Vedas)*, 'अश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम्' *(Gītā* XV. 1) (the *Pīpala* tree in the form of creation is said to be emperishable), 'त्वमव्ययः शाश्वतधर्मगोप्ता' *(Gītā* XI. 18) (God is the protector of Eternal *Dharma)*. These terms in *Gītā* prove the eternity of God the individual and *Vedas* and the *Sanātana Dharma*. Religious and social life of Hindus is based on this *Sanātana Dharma*. Even any flawless unhindered path other than that based on *Vedas* is not acceptable to Hindus. The salient features of *Hindu Code Bill* are in respect of—

(1) Registration of marriage
(2) Divorce
(3) Adoption of the son
(4) Daughters are equally entitled to succession of father's property
(5) Monogamy

Let us discuss the rules governing the marriage.

(1) Either party to the marriage must not be a husband or a wife.

(2) Either of the two should not be an idiot or lunatic.

(3) The minimum age of the boy and girl shall be 21 and 18 respectively.

(4) Both should not come as lineal descendents upto five generations on paternal side and three generations on maternal side.

The very first rule regarding marriage violates the principle of *Sanātana Dharma*. It allows a woman to remarry after the death of the husband. A woman can marry once only that is our *Sanātana Dharma* law. In *Manusmṛti*—

न तु नामापि गृह्णीयात्पत्यौ प्रेते परस्य तु ।

(V. 157)

"A wife, after the death of her husband, should never think of another man."

सकृदंशो निपतति सकृत्कन्या प्रदीयते ।

(IX. 47)

"A person enherits only once..........and daughter's hands are given only once."

न विवाहविधावुक्तं विधवावेदनं पुनः ॥

(IX. 65)

"In matrimonial procedure a remarriage of a widow is nowhere prescribed."

The Pious and chaste Sāvitrī even did not like to marry any person other than Satyavān when she had only chosen in mind though she knew well that the age of the spouse mentally chosen by her, is only of a very limited span. Therefore, to think of marriage even during the life of the husband after divorce or after his death, is a great sin according to *Sanātana Dharma*. Thus *Hindu Code Bill* violates the marriage law as laid down in *Smṛtis*.

No doubt monogamy is good but in *Sanātana Dharma* a man can have two wives though a woman cannot have two husbands. It is seen that the wife encourages a husband to remarry for the continuity of her dynasty. According to the Code he must divorce his wife. Then only he can marry again. Thus if his first wife has no objection rather supports him even then a man cannot remarry according to the Code . In *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* we see that Yājñavalkyajī had two wives—Kātyāyanī and Maitreyī. 'पतिर्जनीनाम्' (*Ṛgveda* I. 66. 8) (Lord of many wives), 'पुत्रार्थी द्वितीयां भार्यां विन्देत' (for the sake of having a son, one can have two wives).This is stated by Kautilya.

In *Hindu Code Bill* there is a rule that either of the boy and the girl should not be an idiot or lunatic. Sometimes it is very difficult to assess the idiocy or lunacy of the spouses. Suppose if the marriage is solemnised with an idiot spouse then it can be divorced according to *Hindu Code Bill*. A chaste wife does not divorce her husband even if he is a stark fool. In *Bhāgavata* it has been stated by Lord Kṛṣṇa—

दुःशीलो दुर्भगोवृद्धो जडो रोग्यधनोऽपि वा।
पतिः स्त्रीभिर्न हातव्यो लोकेप्सुभिरपातकी ॥

(X 29.25)

"Even if the husband is a fool or a diseased or a poor fellow, he should not be discarded by a chaste woman."

The rule relating to the age of the girl at the time of marriage also infringes our *Sanātana Dharma*. According to *Sanātana Dharma* the age of the girl is to be between 8 to 12. At the age of 12 she attains her puberty. She must be married before attaining her puberty.

माता चैव पिता चैव ज्येष्ठभ्राता तथैव च।
त्रयस्ते नरकं यान्ति दृष्ट्वा कन्यां रजस्वलाम् ॥

(*Saṁvarta* I. 67)

"Mother, father and the elder brother as well, go to hell if the girl is not married before she has attained her puberty."

Manu also says similarly—

स हि स्वाम्यादतिक्रामेदृतूनां प्रतिरोधनात्।

(*Manu*)

"After attaining her puberty the girl is no more under the lordship of her parents in other words she is free to choose her spouse."

कन्यां ऋतुमतीं शुद्धां कृत्वा निष्कृतिमात्मनः।
शुद्धिञ्च कारयित्वा तामुद्वहेदानृशंस्यधीः ॥

"The parents should give a daughter who has crossed her puberty age, only after purifying her as well as themselves by expiating."

By these words in *Nirṇayasindhu* sage Aśvala has ruled expiation for marrying a girl who has reached her puberty.

The *Hindu Code Bill* allows a marriage in the same caste even in the same *Gotra* after five generations on the father's side and three generations on the maternal side. This is a violation of our *Sanātana Dharma*.

सपिण्डापत्यदारेषु प्राणत्यागो विधीयते ।

(*Bṛhadyama*)

"If a person is married to one from a close lineage of parents, there is always a possibility of death for either one or both the partners."

असपिण्डा च या मातुः असगोत्रा च या पितुः ।

(*Manu*)

"Manu recommends to marry a girl who is out of his parental *Gotra* and beyond the limit of maternal generations entitled for *Piṇḍa* offered by him."

From these statements a marriage in the same *Gotra* of the father and upto seven generations of *Gotra* of mother is prohibited.

The marriage according to *Sanātana Dharma* is sacrament not a contract but *Hindu Code Bill* makes it a contract that can be declared void or it can be annulled or dissolved or divorce can be had. Several grounds have been mentioned idiocy, luancy, impotency, cruelty, conversion into another religion, incurable disease and consent under duress etc.

'इतः—पितृकुलात् प्रमुञ्चामि न अमुतः भर्तृगृहात् प्रमुञ्चामि'

(सा० भा०)

"A woman leaves only her father's house but she never forsakes during her life her husband's house. That is the *Sanātana Dharma* law.

Hindu Code allows a man to adopt a son from any caste. In other words a Brahmin can adopt a boy of *Śūdra* as his son."

माता पिता वा दद्यातां यमद्भिः पुत्रमापदि ।
सदृशं प्रीतिसंयुक्तं स ज्ञेयो दत्रिमः सुतः ॥

(*Manu* IX. 168)

"The boy who has been given to a person of equal *Kula-Gotra* and who is affectionate to the child, after due *Saṅkalpa* at a time of emergency, is called *Datṛima* (adopted son)."

In these words it has been clearly stated that the adopted son should be of the same caste.

Clause 86 of *Hindu code Bill* recognises no right of a child to claim any interest in any property of an ancestor during his life time by mere birth in the family.

Clause 87 provides that on the ground of survivorship no right or interest can be claimed in any joint family property and all persons holding any joint family property on the day the code commences shall be deemed to hold it as tenant in common as if the partition has taken place among all members of the joint family and as if each one of them is holding his or her own share separately as full owner thereof.

The clauses will disintegrate the joint family system. This change will cut the very root of joint family. 'सर्वं वा पूर्वजस्येतरान् बिभृयात् पितृवत्' (*Gautama Dharmasūtra* 28. 3). The eldest son is entitled to succession of the property. He should foster all the brothers just as a father. This aphorism supports joint family system. Bharata followed Rāma, Bhīma, Yudhiṣṭhira and Duḥśāsana followed Duryodhana. This has been the practice in *Tretā* and *Dwāpara* ages also as stated in *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*.

ज्येष्ठ एव तु गृह्णीयात्पित्र्यं धनमशेषतः ।
शेषास्तमुपजीवेयुर्यथैव पितरं तथा ॥

(*Manu* IX. 105)

"Only the eldest son has got the right to inherit his father's property. All younger brothers should depend upon him just as they were depending on their father (during his life-time)."

These words of Manu also support the joint family system.

These provisions can dislocate the Hindu society, and are clear in violation of the *Sanātana Dharma*.

The clause 100 of the *Hindu code Bill* envisages an equal share for daughters in the father's property. This provision is never going to be implemented by Hindus because it will wreck havoc in the family life.

These provisions are quite contrary to the principles of

Sanātana Dharma. These will not do any benefit rather they will create quarrels among brothers and sisters. In father-in-law's house 'नन्द' (sister-in-law) and 'भाभी' (brother's wife) will fight each other. The mother-in-law has a great affection for her son-in-law. She will consider him an enemy because he will claim property on behalf of her wife in the family property.

This is a well known fact that daughters cannot depend on father's property. They have to depend only on their husband's means of living. The daughter will get father's property only after father's death. Till that day how will she maintain her life ? For property sake the daughters will desire father's death. Suppose a daughter is aged 60 years. Her father is 80 year old. The daughter had spent so big a span of life without father's property. Is it necessary to give father's property now after father's death ? She has been living a comfortable and peaceful life till this day on her husband's income. Therefore the provisions of code are only meant to disturb the family peace.

Now we may quote *Śāstras* which go against these provisions.

Only the son can offer rice (पिण्ड) and water (तर्पण) to the manes. 'सन्तान कर्मणे पिण्ड दानाय' (*Nirukta* 23. 1. 4. 6). 'सायण' Sāyaṇa elaborates it—

पिण्डदानादि कर्तृत्वात् पुत्रो दायार्हः दुहिता तथा न दार्याहा ।
पुत्रः पुंस्त्रायते निरयाद्वा पुंनरकं ततस्त्रायते ।

(II. 11)

These words prove that the son is a *Putra* in reality only due to his offerings of 'पिण्डदान' to his father after his death 'पिण्डं दत्त्वा धनं हरेत्' (*Manu* IX. 136).

"One who offers libations to father after his death is entitled to his properties." Thus son is entitled to father's property. In *Gītā* it has been stated that 'पतन्ति पितरो ह्येषां लुप्त पिण्डोदकक्रियाः (I. 42). If daughters are made to share equally in father's property it is just possible that sons will be discouraged to offer rice and water to their ancestors. They may not defray expenses on these ceremonies as they would think why they alone should engage themselves in all these ceremonies, why not their sisters who have claimed equal shares in father's property. Thus deprived of the

offerings of rice and water from their descendents the manes of the family suffer a fall from the world of manes. Thus manes will go to hells. *Sanātana Dharma* principle is that every human being is vouchsafed this valuable human body only for salvation. That very purpose of human life gets defeated by sending the manes to hell. Thus *Hindu Code Bill* is quite contrary to the eternal principles of *Sanātana Dharma*.

We have got absolute faith in our *Vedas*—we do not limit them to the books known by this name. We regard them as the knowledge of God. We are convinced that if the modern science is allowed to progress at this rate for five hundred years more, a time will surely come when the truths of the various sciences will be regarded as the best possible commentaries on the *Vedas*. We are sorry the people of our own country are neglecting the *Vedas* without even trying to understand them. Most of the people who read some sections of the *Vedas* read them not with the help of the best *Bhāṣya* but through the ideas of the people of the West who could understand very little of the *Vedas* due to wrong notions and want of proper realization.

—*A. Mahatma*

Listen, dear Garuḍa, to this unutterable romance, which can only be comprehended by the mind but is incapable of expression. The soul is a particle of the divinity, immortal, conscious, untainted by *Māyā* and blissful by nature. Such a soul, my lord, has allowed itself to be dominated by *Māyā* and has been caught in its own trap like a parrot or a monkey. Matter and spirit have been linked together with a knot which, though imaginary, is difficult to untie. Since then the soul has become worldly it can have no happiness till this knot is untied. The *Vedas* and *Purāṇas* have suggested a number of devices for untying the knot; but the knot, far from being resolved, becomes harder and harder. The interior of the soul being utterly clouded with the darkness of ignorance, the knot cannot even be perceived; how, then can it be untied.

—*Mānasa* (VII. 117. 1—7)

Jaina Dharma—The Ancient Religion

—*Mahavir Prasad Jain*

Jainism is one of the most ancient and probably the only non-absolutist religion of the world. According to Jāina traditions, the human soul and the universe are *Anādi* (beginningless) and *Ananta* (endless). Jainism literally means the noble path and the faith propounded and preached by the Jina, the perfect omniscient being. The followers of this path are known as Jainas. Earlier, it was known as the *Śramaṇa Saṁskṛti.* The *Śramaṇas* worshipped *Deva* (the *Jina), Śāstra* (accumulated and recorded knowledge given out by the Jina) and *Guru* (the saints) who tread the path shown by the *Jina,* disseminating and propagating the threefold perfect path of *Samyak Darśana* (right faith) *Samyak Jñāna* (right knowledge) and *Samyak Caritra* (right conduct), by observing which one attains *Mokṣa* (liberation from the cycle of births and deaths) which is the ultimate aim of human soul. *"samyak darśana jñāna cāritrāṇi mokṣamārgaḥ."*

The concept of God as the creator and preserver of the universe, has not been taken into account in Jaina philosophy. The Jaina thought mostly concentrates on the potentiality of human soul to emancipate itself into divinity having shorn off itself of all weaknesses of a human being, i.e., pride, jealousy fear, love, infatuation etc. Jainas believe in the concept of *Tīrthaṅkara* which means the ascension of man into Godhood. It is a wonderful philosophy and a deeply introvert faith believing in the human effort *(Parākrama)* to emerge and emancipate himself into a perfect soul, that is God Himself *(Paramātmā).*

Lord Ṛṣabhadeva also known as Lord Ādinātha, the first *Tīrthaṅkara* who may also be called the founder of Jainism in the current cycle of time, is also identified as 13th of the 24 incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu and probably the first human *Avatāra* among them, according to *Bhāgavata Purāṇa.* Thus the antiquity

of *Jaina Dharma* goes back to the beginning of human civilization when Lord Ṛṣabhadeva gave the sixfold path of *Asi* (sword), *Masi* (ink), *Kṛṣi* (agriculture), *Vidyā* (learning), *Vāṇijya* (commerce) and *Śilpa* (arts and crafts), which form the foundation of the present human civilization. Lord Ṛṣabhadeva's eldest son Bharata was the first *Cakravartī* king of Ayodhya after whose name our country came to be known as Bhāratavarṣa.

Basic Principles—

Jainism is the universal religion and propounds a philosophy for the total emancipation of all mankind—nay of all living beings *(Jīva)* from their never-ending miseries, fears and ills of life. It propagates universal brotherhood of man irrespective of any distinction of birth, caste, creed, colour or race as also compassion towards animals and all lower forms of living creatures from the tiniest bodied amoeba to the giantly pre-historic dinosaur. Its lofty principles of *Ahiṁsā* (non-violence) and *Anekāntavāda* (non-absolutism) root out all causes of conflict between nations and religions of the world and aim at everlasting peace on this planet based on the dignity of the individual and respect for all forms of life.

The deep profundity of the doctrine of *Ahiṁsā* (non-violence) aims at bringing out the best in the individual and his self-emancipation into a divine being who has only love and goodwill for all and malice against none. To achieve this noble end Jainism enunciates a tenfold path *(Daśalakṣaṇa Dharma)* of—

(1) *Uttama Kṣamā* (forgiveness) (2) *Uttama Mārdava* (humility) (3) *Uttama Ārjava* (absence of deceipt) (4) *Uttama Satya* (purity of truthfulness) (5) *Uttama Śauca* (cleanness of mind) (6) *Uttama Saṁyama* (strict self-discipline) (7) *Uttama Tapa* (self penance for spiritual purification austerity) (8) *Uttama Tyāga* (self renunciation) (9) *Uttama Ākiñcanya* (non-possessiveness—absence of all greed) and (10) *Uttama Brahmacarya* (unfettered celebacy and self absorption), for uplifting oneself to his potential godhood which is his real-self. Practising this tenfold path, men could purify their souls of all unwanted attachments of pride, anger, hatred, greed etc., and

emancipate themselves into good humans on way to the attainment of godhood. Such men will be great assets to human civilization and conflicts and dissensions will disappear for ever from human society. The society is composed of individuals, and if the individuals improve, the society will improve collectively by itself. As the old saying goes—"Take care of the penny and the pound will take care of itself." This equally applies to human society as well. Thus, the Jaina doctrine of *Ahiṁsā* seeks to transform the individual and through him the entire society for the everlasting good of the human race as a whole.

The doctrine of *Anekāntavāda* (non-absolutism) is a unique contribution of Jainism to the human thought and philosophy. Diving deep into human nature and the variable environment and circumstances in which he has been obliged to live, develop and shape his mental inclinations over the ages, this immaculate doctrine fully analyses the human search for truth and his varied conclusions drawn in his relentless effort to reach the ultimate. This study has revealed that human findings of truth are relative depending upon *Dravya, Kṣetra, Kāla* and *Bhāva* (substance, place, time and circumstances) which form the eternal quaternary for his practical guidance. Truth, thus is multi-faceted and is deeply related to this quaternary bound by *Dravya, Kāla, Bhāva* and *Kṣetra*. The diversity of languages, faiths, customs, tastes and styles of living that we find in this vast world, are due to this phenomenon of change and multifariousness that characterise the human society everywhere. Thus goes an adage in *Saṁskṛta (bhinnārucirhi lokaḥ)*. Truth is thus neither stationary nor absolute. It is both dynamic, and realistic and essentially relative to this quaternary. We should thus respect all religions and human faiths fully recognising the difference in substance, place, time and circumstances in which these were propounded. Taking *Ahiṁsā* as a common denominator, all human thoughts motivate their followers towards the common good and welfare of the entire human race and all living creatures at large. The principle of *Anekāntavāda* thus postulates the theory of relativity of all human faiths and enjoins on us to speak the truth as we see it with a

prefix of 'also' and not 'only', saying that we are also right and not that only we are right and others are wrong. Since the capacity of human eye to perceive and that of the human mind to comprehend is limited, what we see at a time is only a part of the whole truth and not the whole truth in its absoluteness and so our wisdom lies in our accepting these limitations and respecting all modifications of the absolute truth as propounded by the great seers of different religions of the world while having firm faith in our own religion. The philosophy of *Anekāntavāda* essentially enunciates this approach and calls for peace on this earth through the teaching of all-absorbing *Ahiṁsā* (with its ten ingredients) in our heart and *Syādvāda (Anekāntavāda)* in our speech. This is the panacea for all ills of human society. In this sense, Jainism may be said to be the apotheosis of relativity with which Eastern world has made the Western world familier much before Einstien came out with his theory of relativity in the field of physics, i.e., Energy=mass × volume^2 ($E=mv^2$).

Fundamentals of Jaina Philosophy—

The essence of Jaina philosophy may be summed up as under—

There are innumerable living beings in this world. All of them want to live in peace and comfort and are afraid of pain and death. The human soul is wandering in multitudinous living forms (84 lakh forms), even visiting hell and heaven for unimaginably long periods but real peace and bliss has always eluded it. Its search for peace seems to be endless and ever prolonging with the end nowhere in sight. This soul has immense divine potentialities of being all-knowing repository of everlasting peace and never-ending pleasantness and ultimately attaining godhood *(Arhanta* and *Siddha Awasthā)*, by purging itself of all attachments of love and malice, pain and pleasure, hatred and enamourment, greed and allurement, passion and enticement etc. The only pre-requisite is the will of the person to realize himself—the divinity in his own soul. As a matter of fact, every human soul has potentialities of godhood, i.e., it is a potential God and is the repository of *Ananta Jñāna* and *Ananta Sukha* in itself.

The entire effort of Jaina philosophy is to help and guide the

individual to realise this divinity in himself and attain Godhood by releasing his soul from the cycle of births and deaths *(Āwāgamana)* and crossing the ocean of mundane existence into divine *Siddha Śilā*. There is no limitation to this. Every soul has the innate capacity to attain this stage of *Ananta Jñāna* and *Sukha*.

The contradiction in this world, however, is that this soul with so much wonderful divine endowments is mostly in bondage of *Karmas* which go on tightening their hold on it so much so that the cycle of birth and death engulfs the soul's dynamism entirely. To check these movements emanating from *Karma* and obtain its release from the hold of transmigration, Jaina philosophy has analysed this phenomenon into its minutest details and conclusions containing infinite knowledge, as given out by the 24 *Tīrthaṅkaras* (spiritual guides) from time to time, is contained in Jaina *Āgamas* *(Śāstras*—canonical texts). A study of these *Śāstras* reveals the mysteries of this universe and provides valuable guidance as also a code of conduct to cross this ocean of mundane existence into the everlasting bliss of divinity the state of Godhood which is the real nature and aim of every soul.

In Jainism seven principles *(Tattvas)* are enunciated to explain the working of the *Karma* theory—(1) *Jīva* (living soul). (2) *Ajīva* (matter, non-living) (3) *Āsrava* (inflow of *Karmas)* (4) *Bandha* (bondage of *Karmas)* (5) *Saṁvara* (checking of inflow of *Karmas)* (6) *Nirjarā* (shedding of *Karmas)* and (7) *Mokṣa* (liberation from the cycle of birth and death). The interaction between the conscious soul *(Jīva)* and the non-conscious body *(Ajīva)* causes the birth of *Karmas*. The operation of these *Karmas* which are of eight kinds, obscure and soil the purity of the soul and obstruct its journey towards self-realization. The impure thought activity, thus caused, gives rise to the bondage of these 8 kinds of Karmic classes with their 148 sub-classes. The primary cause of *Karmas* are the Karmic molecules themselves which have the capacity of being attracted by soul's vibrations and transforming themselves into *Karmas* with various kinds of strong or mild fruitation. Their bondage *(Bandha)* is for long or short durations depending upon the intensity or mildness of passions causing this bondage.

The eight kinds of *Karmas* four *Ghātiā* (destructive) and four *Aghātiā* (non-destructive) are—

(1) *Jñānāvaranīya* (knowledge obscuring) *Karmas*—five types.

(2) *Darśanāvaranīya* (deluding) *Karmas*—nine types.

(3) *Mohanīya* (attachments caused by passions) *Karmas*—twenty-eight types.

(4) *Antarāya* (obstructing which prevent the manifestation of soul power) *Karmas*—five types. The other four *Aghātiyā Karmas* are—

(5) *Vedanīya* (causing, feeling of pain and pleasure) *Karmas*—two types.

(6) *Āyuṣ* (age) *Karmas* which determine the duration of soul's transmigration—four types.

(7) *Nāman* (identifying the body—ugly or beautiful)—ninety-three types.

(8) *Gotra* (family-determining *Karmas* giving the mundane soul high and low status)—two types.

These eight kinds of *Karmas* (four *Ghātiā* and four *Aghātiā)* with their 148 sub sections prevent the soul, having divine potentialities, to realise itself and so condition it as to make it wander about in 84 lakhs manifestations of life in this mundane world through the system of *Āwāgamana* (transmigration of soul through repeated operation of life and death). The inflow of these *Karmas* into the union of body and soul is called *Āsrava.* When these *Karmas* stay with sòul, a bondage *(Bandha)* is created which tend to throw the soul into numerous rounds of births and rebirths and become cause of untold misery and pain to it. To escape from the onslaught of these devastating *Karmas* the principle of *Saṁvara* (checking the inflow) is to be applied just like plugging a hole in the boat to prevent the water from coming in and save it from sinking. Once the inflow of *Karmas* is checked, efforts are to be started to destroy *(Nirjarā)* first the four *Ghātiā Karmas* to achieve omniscience *(Kewala Jñāna)* and attain the status of *Arhanta* (the omniscient being) and thereafter the remaining four *Aghātiā Karmas* to attain the final salvation *(Mokṣa)*. It may be clarified here that *Karmas*

could be *Śubha* (auspicious) or *Aśubha* (ominous). *Puṇya* (merit) or *Pāpa* (sin) pleasure-giving or pain-giving, but both types of *Karmas* become cause of bondage to the soul and prevent it from realizing its divine self. Both categories of *Karmas* are to be disengaged for liberating the soul from the cycle of births and deaths and enabling it to acquire its real immaculate state of pure consciousness, everlasting peace and infinite bliss *(Sat, Cit, Ānanda).*

Jaina Methodology for Salvation (Mokṣa)—

samyak darśana jñāna cāritrāṇi mokṣamārgaḥ ।

The above *Sūtra* connotes that the path to salvation *(Mokṣa Mārga)* is through the cultivation of right faith *(Samyak Darśana)*, right knowledge *(Samyak Jñāna)* and right conduct *(Samyak Cāritra)*. In Jaina terminology, this triple code is known as *Ratna-traya* the three jewels the shining principles for salvation. To acquire right faith leading to right knowledge and right conduct Jaina philosophy, as propounded by the twenty. four *Tīrthaṅkaras* (spiritual guides) and contained in Jaina *Āgamas* (canonical texts) and numerous commentaries by the learned *Ācāryas*, ordains dual guide-lines for renouncing ascetics and the common householder respectively. These involve—

(1) Code of self discipline *(Vrata)* and (2) A systematic study of religious literature *Swādhyāya* besides meditation *(Dhyāna)* and prayers in the temple (Deva Darśana). For ascetics (saints) the fivefold path of self discipline *(Mahā Vrata)* is prescribed, i.e., *Ahiṁsā* (non-violence), *Satya* (truth), *Acaurya* (non-stealing), *Aparigraha (non-possessiveness)* and *Brahmacarya* (strict celebacy). An ascetic *(Sādhu)* has to observe these *Vratas* literally. without any relaxation whatsoever. Jaina *Munis* and *Ācāryas* have prescribed further practices/observances for the saints to adhere to these *Mahāvratas* strictly without any deviation. A saint of the Jaina order has to perform *Pratikramaṇa* (self repentance). Process of self-purification, to atone for whatever acts of *Hiṁsā* (minor violence) and deviation he might have committed while walking, talking, eating, meditating or going

about his other daily routine. It is implied that a saint of Jaina order is a strict vegetarian and does not eat after sunset. All these practices and ordinances regarding the behavioural practices by saints and ascetics are given in the first chapter *(Aṅga)* known as *Ācārāṅga* of the twelve chapter *Dwādaśāṅga Vāṇī* containing teachings of *Tīrthaṅkaras* particularly the last one, Lord Mahāvīra. This *Vāṇī* (knowledge) given out by spiritual guides containing comprehensive and complete knowledge about the universe, *Ātmā, Paramātmā, Pudgala* (matter) Karmic operations and salvation, is embodied in voluminous texts of 12 categories mostly written in *Saṁskṛta* and *Prākṛta* languages. It is a vast literature dealing the philosophical and theological aspects of Jainism.

Samayasāra by *Ācārya* Kunda Kunda, is a very comprehensive treatise on the essence of the soul. Systematic and concentrated study of the Jaina literature, as indicated above, will reveal to the reader all the mysteries of the life and universe and clearly lay before him the path to salvation of the soul.

To the lay householder the fivefold path of *Mahā-Vartas* mentioned above is applicable in a relaxed and workable form and the same discipline he has to observe in a miniform called *Anu-Vrata*. This relaxation is not a licence with him to violate them wilfully or carelessly. If he does so, he will be guilty of gross mis-conduct and is liable to create bondage of worst *Karmas*. The relaxation only pertains to the inabilities and compulsions of daily life. As an explanation he is allowed to marry and still observe the vow of *Brahmacarya* by scrupulously avoiding all extra-marital relations with *Mana, Vācana* and *Kāya* (in thought, word and deed). Similarly he can put a limit to his possessions and observe the vow of *Aparigraha*, to observe *Satya* (truthfulness) relaxation is confined to extreme emergencies where stake of life or danger to peace is involved. For observing *Ahiṁsā*, he should carefully avoid all wilful *Hiṁsā*, i.e., except when security to life and lawful possessions or the defence of the country is involved. Exception is also given for *Ārambhī Hiṁsā* i.e., the minor *Hiṁsā* he is compelled to effect while cooking

food, cultivating the land or doing other work despite all his care and precautions. In *Acaurya* (non-stealing) no relaxation is allowed. It is also compulsory for him to be a strict vegetarian, not to eat after sunset, avoid all intoxicants, filter water before drinking and lead a strictly moral life. Meditation, *Devadarśana* (obeisance to the deity and prayers in the temple) and *Svādhyāya* (self study) are other practices recommended to the lay householder for applying *Saṁvara* to the inflow of *Karmas* and making a steady progress towards the ultimate goal of the soul i.e., *Mokṣa*.

It will be relevant to mention here the names of the twenty-four holy *Tīrthaṅkaras* (spiritual guides) who have bestowed the universal knowledge on us for our salvation. They are as follows in the order of their appearance—

(1) Bhagavān Ṛṣabhadeva (Lord Ādinātha) (2) Bhagavān Ajitanātha (3) Bhagavān Sambhavanātha (4) Bhagavān Abhinandananātha (5) Bhagavān Sumatinātha (6) Bhagavān Padmaprabha (7) Bhagavān Supārśvanātha (8) Bhagavān Candraprabha (9) Bhagavān Puṣpadanta (10) Bhagavān Śītalanātha (11) Bhagavān Śreyāṁsanātha (12) Bhagavān Vāsupūjya (13) Bhagavān Vimalanātha (14) Bhagavān Anantanātha (15) Bhagavān Dharmanātha (16) Bhagavān Śāntinātha (17) Bhagavān Kunthanātha (18) Bhagavān Aranātha (19) Bhagavān Mallinātha (20) Bhagavān Munisuvratanātha (21) Bhagavān Naminātha (22) Bhagavān Neminātha (23) Bhagavān Pārśvanātha (24) Bhagavān Mahāvīra.

Ascetics and Sects—

There are four sects among the Jainas today i.e., *Digambara, Śwetāmbara, Sthānakavāsī* and *Terā Panthī*. All believe in the twenty four *Tīrthaṅkaras, Mahā Mantra Namokāra* and a common five coloured flag representing *Pañca Parameṣṭhīs, Arhantas, Siddhas, Ācāryas, Upādhyāyas* and *Sādhus*. A common book entitled *Samaṇa Suttam* has also been written and distributed.

The first two sects, *Digambaras* and *Śwetāmbaras* are original divisions and the other two are protestant cults coming out of

Śwetāmbara and *Sthānakavāsī* sects respectively. *Digambara Sādhus* acquiring Munihood, the highest state in saintly hierarchy acquire nudity unmindful of the changes and vagaries of weather and eat food and drink water only once in twenty-four hours and that too in the morning. *Śwetāmbara Sādhus* use unstiched white clothes to cover themselves and so do *Sthānakavāsīs* and *Terāpanthī Sādhus*. In addition, the latter two put a white wrap over their mouths as well. There are nuns *(Sādhvīs)* also in all the four sects and undergo some rigours of discipline as the monks except that even *Digambara Sādhus* use unstiched white clothes to cover themselves. No Jaina saint eats after sunset. He also does not use any transport (i.e., walks on foot only) even when he goes across the country. All are strict vegetarians.

Mūlamantra—

The most important and basic *Mūlamantra* of the Jains like the *Gāyatrī Mantra* of the *Vedas* is the *Mahā Mantra* Navkāra or the *Namokāra Mantra*. This *Pañca Namaskāra* to *Pañca Parameṣṭhīs* (five salutations) to Arhantas (perfect omniscient beings), *Siddhas* (perfect-omniscient-liberated souls), *Ācāryas* (heads of ascetic orders), *Upādhyāyas* (teachers of religious order—*Gurus)* and *Sādhus* (self-disciplined renounced beings) of the universe, is prosperity giving and destroyer of all sins. Its recitation causes happiness and prosperity everywhere to all those who recite and those who meditate on it as also those who simply listen to it with faith and reverence.

'णमो अरिहंताणं' I bow to all *Arhantas* (omniscient beings).

'णमो सिद्धाणं' I bow to all *Siddhas* (omnisient liberated souls of the universe).

'णमो आयरियाणं' I bow to all *Ācāryas* (heads of ascetic orders).

'णमो उवज्झायाणं' I bow to all *Upādhyāyas* (teachers of religious order—*Gurus)*.

'णमो लोए सव्वसाहूणं' I bow to all *Sādhus* (self disciplined renounced beings) of the universe.

एसो पंचणमोकारो सव्वपावप्पणासणो ।
मंगलाणं च सव्वेसि पढमं हवइ मंगलम् ॥

There is a popular belief that one can ward off all evil spirits, cure all ills of mind and body, get over all hurdles of daily life and achieve all material prosperity and spiritual bliss by the repeated recitations of and concentration on this *Mahā Mantra*. This is applicable to everyone and not only to members of the Jaina community. Therefore this *Mantra* has universal appeal and adoration.

Epilogue—

This way the readers will find that every principle of Jainism in its basic concept, either philosophical or theological, is akin to the principles of the *Sanātana Dharma*. It is simply futile to debate about the antiquity. The only basic difference between the two is the non-absolute nature of Jaina thinking. Even the theory of *Syādvāda* may be found in its seed form in *Vedic Sūktas*.

What a noble view of religion is this ! This will put a stop to all religious tension, all religious controversies, all religious bickerings—in fact, all crusades that we wage, and all horrors that we perpetrate nowadays in the name of religion. Of course, we should help another fellow-passenger with our personal experiences, when we see him come to a point where he stands in need of help. But this help should be by way of a suggestion and not in the form of a criticism and discussion. Never try to thrust your own views upon others, but simply try to awaken in them a higher consciousness by virtue of which they may be able to see the truth for themselves.

A man who performs the duties laid down in the *Śrutis (Vedas)* and the *Smṛtis* acquires fame in this life and supreme happiness hereafter. *Śruti* should be understood to signify the *Vedas* and *Smṛti* covers the various codes of law. Both these should be regarded as unquestionable in all matters; for it is through these that *Dharma* has come to light.

Dharma: The Only Way to Happiness and Peace

—*Swami Sri Cidananda Sarasvati*

Dyed in the colour of Europe and America, and dazzled with the glittering of science, the Indian youth of today has also started saying—"I hate *Dharma* and God. Please do not talk of this *Dharma* with me." But, my brother, you are forgetting the very foundation. The God whom you hate so much, is constantly seated in your body and in your heart iteslf. It is through His grace that your eyes can see and your ears can hear. By dint of his kindness your nose is able to smell and tongue to taste. It is only due to his favour that your hands indulge in the acts of taking and giving and your feet are able to walk. Because of his mercy your intellect is able to take decision and mind can function. What else ? Even your life itself depends on his kindness. How can you pull on if you hate such God ?

This is true also about *Dharma*. The form of *Dharma* is many times greater than the extensive universe you live in. This world of yours is stationed in a corner of *Dharma's* belly. Then if you hate such a *Dharma* how can you maintain yourself ?

The nature of *Dharma* is so extensive that it cannot be confined in the limits of any definition. Thus, different thinkers have put forward numerous definitions of *Dharma*, each from his own point of view. The etymology, too, of *Dharma* has been variously given. If we take one photograph of this room where we are sitting, placing the camera in the north-eastern *(Īśā .a)* corner, and another by fixing it in the south-western *(Nairṛtya)* corner, these two photographs will not be similar. While in one our faces will be visible, the other will present our backs to view. Likewise the etymology and definition of *Dharma* were worked out in accordance with the ground chosen to stand and the point from which *Dharma* was viewed upon.

Now, let us see some of the etymologies of *Dharma*. The ultimate meaning in all of them is indeed one and the same. But as we have remarked earlier, it appears to us in different forms with the difference of our angle of looking upon it. (1) 'धिन्वनाद् धर्मः' The word *Dhinvana* means sustaining or consoling, infusing confidence in people in distress and pointing out to them the path of happiness. Such a conduct is *Dharma*. *(2)* 'धारणाद् धर्मः' Sustaining, saving from pains. Just as Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa had saved Vraja holding the mountain Govardhana, similarly that by following which in conduct, society avoids degeneration and is capable of maintaining firmly its elevated position, is called *Dharma*. Like water all existences go downwards by nature. That is to say, if *Dharma* is not resorted to, society by its nature tends to fall downwards. Today we are falling downwards day by day only because we have forsaken the prop of *Dharma*. This is evidently clear.

Bhagavān Manu has pointed out ten features or *Lakṣaṇas* of *Dharma*. They include all the forms of practising *Dharma*. The *Purāṇas* have expanded them up to thirty *Lakṣaṇas*. If only one or two aspects of *Dharma* are practised intelligently, the others are automatically comprehended. Just as when one foot of a cot is dragged, the other three feet follow it on their own, similarly the practice of a few aspects of *Dharma* comprehends the rest of them too. Practice of *Dharma* must go on with perfect scrupulousness.

Now look only at a universal explanation of *Dharma*—an explanation which is accepted by all. In fact, *Dharma* is not thoroughly understood by discussions or the study of the scriptures. It is an object to be translated into conduct. As the conduct becomes more and more infused with *Dharma* so the secrets of *Dharma* become more and more intelligible. Reading or discussions yield only a flimsy cognition which may be said to be nothing more than an acquaintance. One definition of *Dharma* is—

यतोऽभ्युदयनिःश्रेयससिद्धिः स धर्मः ।

"That conduct which is efficacious in bestowing fortunes in this life and final beatitude hereafter, is *Dharma*."

Now the meanings of the words *Abhyudaya* and *Niḥśreyasa* should be understood. The sense of *Niḥśreyasa* is clear and therefore it should be examined first. *Śreyas* means welfare. That welfare which is not surpassed by any other welfare in greatness or importance and which is the highest and supreme is called *Niḥśreyasa.* The greatest of the fortunes is known to be the *Mokṣa* or liberation, since after its realization there is nothing left to be achieved. Thus the word *Niḥśreyasa* signify attainment of liberation, realization of *Bhagavān* or emancipation from the bonds of births and deaths. As such *Dharma* is that which being practised, leads to the achievement of liberation or *Mokṣa.* This is one of the difinitions of *Dharma.*

Abhyudaya means only this much that the facilities for the maintenance of body and not the luxuries and riches which make the body indulge in sensuous pleasures, shall be easily accessible. Manu has very briefly pointed out as to how *Dharma* should be practised in conduct.

अहिंसा सत्यमस्तेयं शौचमिन्द्रियनिग्रहः ।
एतद् धर्मं समासेन चातुर्वर्ण्येऽब्रवीन्मनुः ॥

The first is *Ahiṁsā* or non-violence. The general meaning of *Hiṁsā* is the act of causing the separation of life-breath from the body, but its subtle meaning is to injure somebody mentally, vocally or by an act. Causing pain to somebody with one's body, threatening with words to kill or speaking so harsh words as may hurt other's mind or cherishing maliciously in mind, destruction or troubles for others—all this is violence *(Hiṁsā).* Refraining from any act of such violence is called the observance of non-violence.

The second element is *Satya* or truth, where is that religious sect which does not accept the necessity of *Satya.* Although one may not sometimes emphasize the importance of truthful words, yet no religious sect ever tells to practise untruth in conduct. Therefore, *Satya* that is to say, the practice of truth and refraining from untruth is common *Dharma* in all the religious sects.

The third is *Asteya* (non-stealing). *Steya* means the act of stealing. Taking for one's own use any thing either in the absence of its owner or being unnoticed by the owner's eyes, is commonly called a theft. Snatching away an object forcibly from the possession of its owner even while he is present, is called robbing. These are very ordinary senses of stealing and robbing. But the merchant who takes money for one mond of commodity, but gives less in weight or charges for ten yards of cloth but gives less in measurement, takes money for the good quality of the article, but gives inferior or adulterates a standard article with other useless things, a worker who takes full wages but does not attend to the assigned work sincerely and the officer or servant who accepts bribes or demands for the same—in short, all, who are not fully sincere in their action, who accummulate more wealth than they need and the servant who does not faithfully attend to the work assigned to him, are all thieves, robbers and plunderers. Keeping aloof from any type of stealing is said to be the observance of the vow of non-stealing *Asteya-Vrata-Pālana*. I donot expect that there is any religious sect against this principle of non-stealing.

The fourth is *Śauca*. *Śauca* means purity. This firstly includes physical purity or the cleanliness of the body. This fact is understood even by animals and birds. The human being shall therefore follow this rule. What is strange in it ? The second is the purity of mind. The mind should be withdrawn from certain inclinations. The mind should be so purified as no vicious thought might enter it. In respect with *Śauca* too, no religious sect has ever shown antipathy, for it is observed for the purity of body and mind and the planning of all sorts of rituals is meant to meet this end.

The fifth is *Indriyanigraha* or control on sense-organs. Who is independent in true sense ? Only he who has perfect control over his sense-organs and none else. The body may be called independent on the ground of being an inhabitant of an independent country, but a man, who is the slave of his sense-organs, who moves like an animal in the manner they make him

move, is not independent. He is rather worse than a slave. Thus control of sense-organs must be endorsed in one or other form in every religious sect and therefore none of them opposes the preachings for the control of the sense-organs.

It may be clearly seen from this treatment that any state or institution or even society or an individual cannot exist without *Dharma*. State can be non-sectarian, but it cannot be indifferent to *Dharma (Dharma Nirapekṣa)* or unconcerned with *Dharma*. Even the state possesses its *Dharma* and as long that *Dharma* is followed, so long that state is called as *Surājya*. The *Dharma* of the state has been explained in details in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*. The knowledge of this *Dharma* is necessary for every civilized man.

Today the clouds of miseries gathering over us, cannot be warded off by the world-war. Atom bomb, Hydrogen bomb or even the weapons more fierce than these cannot blow them away. Establishment of numerous types of factories cannot remove the troubles. The miseries will not come to an end even by destroying the future generations through the methods of birth-control. Even the great heaps of wealth and abundance of enjoyments cannot shatter the clouds of miseries. Access to the moon, Mars *(Maṅgala)* or Venus *(Śukra)* will not help in getting rid of the troubles. There is only one way for removing these clouds and for establishing happiness and peace and that is *Dharma*. So long as *Dharma* is not established again there is no other means to achieve happiness and peace by shattering away these clouds.

There was place for God and *Dharma* in our country before the arrival of the Englishmen. After their arrival we were charmed to see their attractive objects of enjoyment and gradually tended to be indifferent and careless towards *Dharma*. As we went on ignoring *Dharma* so our troubles went on increasing. Now our sufferings know no bounds. Today the people are dying for the want of a few foodgrains. The empire of immorality has established itself since we have left no place for God and *Dharma*. Having ignored these two we have banished them

completely, and we pay no heed to them at all.

We see that without the establishment of the rule of *Dharma*, there is no other remedy for saving us from the horrible sufferings. *Adharma*, i.e., lack of righteousness and its components such as injustice and immoral conduct will thrive to the extreme and when they will be not in control *Bhagavān*, keeping his words, will take incarnations and establish *Dharma*. Thus, He will destroy the evil-doers, establish *Dharma* and having completed the mission of incarnation disappear Himself being imperishable.

Some men puffed up with a whit of knowledge may question—"Is India alone so full of sins ? Is India the only country where sins are committed so excessively that for removing them the Lord has to take incarnation ? Why is the Lord not obliged to manifest Himself in countries like Europe, America, Africa, Australia, Newzealand etc. ? This proves that sins are committed only in India." In reply to this we have to say only this much that *Bhagavān* appears only to establish *Dharma*. There is no place for *Dharma* in countries other than India, since they possess no sublime plan for human life. Where there is *Dharma*, the life is lived there in accordance with a plan. This plan involves the efforts for achieving the fourfold ends of life—*Dharma* (righteousness), *Artha* (wealth), *Kāma* (pleasure) and *Mokṣa* (liberation). Some other principles are also annexed with it to take this plan to completion. Such as—

(1) The principle of the fruits of action *(Karmaphala)*, (2) The principle of rebirth issuing forth from the principle of *Karmaphala*, (3) The principle of the social arrangement in four castes and (4) The principle of four *Āśramas*, the very base of caste system. This suffices to clarify that when there is no place for *Dharma* in other countries, how can the question of its downfall arise ? How will the Lord be required to take incarnation for its re-establishment—

आहारनिद्राभयमैथुनं च
सामान्यमेतत्पशुभिर्नराणाम् ।

धर्मो हि तेषामधिको विशेषो
धर्मेण हीनाः पशुभिः समानाः ॥

Food, sleep, fear and sex—these four things are common both in the animals and human beings. If there is any special feature in man that is *Dharma*. Therefore those who have no *Dharma* are referred to as animals. God has ordained only one rule for the animals and that is to be born and die having experienced pleasure and pain according to the merits of the previous lives. There are no means in these degraded births for the progress of the soul and therefore the Lord does not have to take incarnation for them. Their life goes on following the laws set by the Lord and for this reason He has not to appear anywhere else than in Bhāratavarṣa

The eternal *Līlā* of the Lord knows no rest. All of us witness the drama of the material world; unluckily, however, we do not view it as divine sport, but have understood it to be something else. The Lord clearly tells us in the *Bhagavadgītā* that form in which we see the universe is not real. It will elude our grasp (न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते). It does not, as a matter of fact, exist in that form. How can it, then, be available to us in that form ? But we never take heed of the words of the Lord and taking the world of our fancy to be real, run after the worthless enjoyments of the world and court fresh trouble every day. Behind this gross (manifest) universe there is a finer or subtle universe (सूक्ष्म जगत्) or the Inner world (अन्तर्जगत्), as it is called.

Dharma is the way which has been followed and lived, with perfect purity of heart, by the wise and the learned, who have neither likes nor dislikes, who wish well of all creatures, who are knowers of *Vedas* and whose conduct conforms to the standard of *Dharma*. That *Dharma*, when followed, brings to man the highest good.

Secularism

—*J. R. Kamath*

Secularism as a political philosophy or expediency for the governance of the country or as a movement in society directed away of otherworldliness to this worldliness and which has found favour and is practised in the West, could hardly have any relevance in India or in Indian society where there is no difference between the secular and the sacred. India is a land of saints and spirituality where prophets appear from time to time without interruption. The stream flows continually even this day. Life itself is a continuous march from the empirical to the spiritual and the aim of every Hindu is to spiritualise life itself. If we read *Encyclopedia Americana* (Vol.24, p. 321), we see the essence of secularism in the West is a concept and practice combating otherworldliness in preference to the present existence which to them is the only and hard reality. The religious factor in public life is less prominent today than in former epochs in the West. States in the West tend to rely less upon religion and more upon administration, education and propaganda to maintain the community and to promote common mind and action deemed necessary. Patriotism has largely replaced religion in public faith (*Ibid* Vol. 23, p. 356). "The movement towards secularism has been in progress during the entire course of modern history and has often been viewed as being anti-Christian and anti-religious" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* Vol. XL). The attempt thus of the West is to ignore the spiritual life and to concentrate on the present life. John Spiers writing on the Christian faith in the West says—"For example, there is the notion that the modern Western civilization is Christian. The fact is that only one in seven calls himself a Christian, and then too, it is only lip-service. The Church authorities are so concerned with this decline in

congregational attendance that they are frantically trying to bring together these centuries-old enemies, the Roman Catholics and the various heretical members of the Protestant Churches. This is the accumenical movement, symbolized by the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury embracing the Roman Catholic Cardinal of Britain. This view of the West being Christian is like calling India a Moslem country—for the proportion of Moslems in India is greater than that of professing Christians in the West. For all practical purposes such as philosophical discussion, Europe, USA, Russia and all modern states are materialistic, and godless."

In India liberty and freedom are what the Hindu tradition is all about. Man has to grow by his experience or what is called 'intuitive insight' and not by thinking and blind following. Should we also become ungodly in order to be secular ? We shall now turn to the Hindu way of life.

In ancient India, there was both monarchical system of government as well as the republican system. We have no details regarding the latter but greater details are available regarding the monarchical system. The king was only the guardian, executor or servant of the *Dharma*, charged to see its observance and to prevent offences, serious irregularities and breaches. He himself was bound first to obey it and observe the rigorous rule it laid on his personal life and action and on the province, power and duties of his regal authority and office. He had no power of direct legislation and was limited to the issue of administrative decrees that had to conform to the religious, social, political, economic constitution of the community. The religious liberties of the common man are assured and could not normally be infringed by any secular authority. Each religious community could shape its own way of life and institutions or governing bodies exercising in their proper field an entire independence. There was no exclusive state religion and the monarch was not the religious head of the people. However he might personally favour any particular sect or creed but he must respect and support in his public office all other religions of the people with certain sense of impartiality.

And they were governed by over-riding *Dharma* and *Varṇāśrama Dharma* ideology. The king as the upholder of *Dharma* was expected to act like an expectant mother sacrificing her all for the sake of protecting the child in the womb. *Dharma* was thus no way different from duty; the values of truth and morality he has to uphold with religion as his guide.

A Hindu makes no difference between the secular and the sacred act for every act he deems as an act of merit for his better and future life. To him every secular act has religious overtone.

India is a world in miniature. It is too vast in area and too diverse in its races. "It is many countries packed into one geographical receptacle. It is just the opposite of what Europe truly is, namely one country made into many. Thus Europe in its culture and growth has had many advantages of the strength of the many as well as strength of the one. India on the contrary being naturally many yet adventitiously one, has all along suffered from the looseness of its diversity and the feebleness of its unity" *(Nationality* by Tagore p. 69). This diversity India had to face from the beginning of its history. India tolerated different races from the first and that spirit of toleration has acted all through her history.

Caste system is an example where we find different peoples belonging to different castes and religions living side by side in perfect unity and amity. "India has all along been trying experiments in evolving a social unity within which all the different peoples could be held together while fully enjoying the freedom of maintaining their own differences. The tie has been as loose as possible, yet as close as the circumstances permitted. This has produced something like a United States of social federation whose common name is Hinduism" (*Ibid* p. 69).

All those living in the area enclosed by the Himalayas in the north and the seas in the south are Indians whether they are Hindus, Moslems, Sikhs or Christians. India is the motherland of all those who dwell in this area. A verse in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* declares—

uttaraṁ yat samudrasya himādreścaiva dakṣiṇam ।
varṣaṁ tad bhāratam nāma bhāratī yatra santatiḥ ॥

"*Bhāratavarṣa* is the name of that country which is the home of the race of Bharata, situated to the north of the (Indian) ocean and south of the Himalayas."

Jawāharalāla Neharū in his *Discovery of India* writes—"In ancient and medieval times the idea of the modern nation was non-existent, and feudal, religious, racial or cultural bonds had more importance. Yet I think that at almost any time in recorded history an Indian would have felt as a stranger and alien in any other country. He would certainly have felt more or less at home in any part of India, and would have felt less of a stranger in countries which had partly adopted his culture or religion.

A nation in short is a group of persons residing in a continuous geographical area having a unity of purpose and an aspiration of a common goal.

The idea of a political identity on such a mass scale or a political religion that stirs the heart and wills of men and rouse them to service and self-sacrifice in a way no religious movements have done in recent times was not within the contemplation of the old people. The present sense of nationality is politically based. Theirs was based on spirituality which stands the test of time and today if we claim any nationality it was because of strong spiritual unity. The seers of old attempted even a unity of whole mankind. Man was treated as one unit by them. Their attempt was always in the direction of a more stable and lasting, the cultural and spiritual oneness and named it *Sanātana Dharma*. *Kula Dharma* is the culture of the group or caste. Similarly the pattern of behaviour prevailing and recognised as good in our motherland as distinguished from what prevails among other peoples may be called *Deśa Dharma*. *Deśa Dharma* is an organic growth which is our duty to respect and which we should not treat as mere Indian superstition or under-development or eccentricity. It is the distinctive feature of life in India whatever political or other changes might have occurred or may occur in the course of history (vide *Our Culture* by C. Rājagopālācārī p. 15).

What are the difficulties confronting India ? Tagore says that it is its vast area and its diverse races. It is just the opposite of what

Europe truly is—one country made into many..... A true unity is like a round globe, it rolls on, carrying its burden easily; but diversity is a many cornered thing which has to be dragged and pushed with force. Be it said to the credit of India that this diversity was not her own creation; she has had to accept it as a fact from the beginning of her history (*Ibid* 67). In spite of this diversity India has always been trying to cement this unity by allowing among its various races, freedom of maintaining their differences within limits; Hindu tolerance acting always as a great absorbent. "Toleration is the homage which the finite mind pays to the inexhaustibility of the infinite", says Rādhākṛṣṇan (*Eastern Religions and Western Thought* p. 317). Toleration of religious practices in a secular constitution is a reconciliation of nationalism and religion. "Tolerance is not clever indifference to things that do not matter, or the things we are not interested in. It is not a tact or diplomacy. It is not born out of a sense and desire for compromise. It is not being everything to everybody. It is not the destruction of distinctness or individuality. It is not the obliteration of the unique nature of objects. It is not a mere attitude of patience with others' short comings. It is a positive, virtue a definite appreciation and an incorporation of the good of others in our own religion. It is organic to Hindu metaphysics and is not an adhoc doctrine arising from the needs of expediency" (P. Nāgarāja Rao in *Meeting of religions* at p. 132, published in *Brahmavādin*, Annual Volume, 1971). He says Hinduism is never completely clean but is ever washed." Hinduism has inherent unity built on diversity. Toleration may be sacred but secularism as the philosophy of materialism is not deemed sacred. Constitution is a political document and not a religious one, and therefore the word secular in it has to be interpreted in a political sense, as a word of diplomacy or as a matter of state policy.

Vincent Smith writes—"India beyond all doubt possesses a deep underlying fundamental unity, far more profound than that produced either by geographical isolation or by political suzerainty. That unity transcends the innumerable diversities of blood, colour, language, dress, manners and sects. (*The oxford History of India* Ed. by Percival Spear 1958, p. 7).

From the beginning of our history India had been a multi-lingual, multi-racial and multi-religious society. It has been the meeting place of various races and cultures.

"India's historic mission has been to forge unity among different races of men, different religious beliefs not by obliterating them but by harmonising them. Even a conservative like Manu observes—

etad deśaprasūtasya sakāśādagrajanmanaḥ ।
swaṁ swaṁ caritraṁ śikṣeran pṛthivyāṁ sarvamānavāḥ ॥

All the poeple of the world will learn about their own traditions from teachers of this country. The Indian tradition is to acknowledge every faith and recognise value wherever it is found" *(The Present Crisis of Faith* by Rādhākṛṣṇan p. 109).

In spite of several invasions and their pressure upon the society, they were not able to crush the soul of India out of the body her *Vedic Ṛṣis* made for her. These *Ṛṣis* who were pioneers in this construction of unity in the midst of diversity were alive to the primary needs of training the people's mind in the conception of what constitutes their motherland to whom is due their national homage. They formulated prayers calling up the physical form and visible image of mother India for meditation and worship. "One prayer defines India as the land of seven sacred rivers covering between them a large part of the country north to south. Millions of devout Hindus of different parts of the country take their bath on the same festival day in the sacred waters to the utterance of a common purificatory prayer which unites them in spirit as bretheren of the same faith. These rivers are—Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Godāvarī, Sarasvatī, Narmadā, Sindhu (Indus) and Kāverī. The prayer addressed to them is—"Come ye and impart thy collective purity to the water I am offering for worship."

"Another prayer calls up the image of mother India as the land of seven sacred cities which a devotee should visit in pilgrimage as an aid to salvation by capturing the religious spirit with which they are. urged by their association with the principal deities of Hinduism. These are Ayodhya, the city of Rāma, Mathura of Kṛṣṇa, Māyā (Haradwar) of goddess Gaṅgā, Kasi of Śiva, Kanchi

dedicated to both Śiva and Viṣṇu. Avanti of Mahākāla, and Dwaraka of Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma "(vide *Glimpses of Ancient India* by Rādhā Kumuda Mookerjī p. 101).

Mookerjī now cites Sister Niveditā who writes about the significance of fifty-two *Pīṭhas* in *Web of Indian Life*—"And in the story of Satī, the perfect wife, who can miss the significance of the fifty-two places *(Pīṭhas)* in which the fragments of her smitten body fell ? And one finger fell in Calcutta and that is still the Kalighat. And the tongue fell at Kangra (Jwālāmukhī) in the north Punjab and appears to this day as licking tongues of fire, from underneath the ground. And the left hand fell at Banaras, which is for ever Annapūrṇā, the giver-of-bread."

Every devout Hindu believes in the efficacy of undertaking pilgrimages in his life time. He firmly believes that pilgrimages properly conducted will atone him from his sins and gain for him merit in this life. He is advised to visit different holy places lying scattered between the Himalayas in the North and Rameswaram in the South. This inculcates in them a living consciousness of the dimensions (the *Virāṭ Deha)* of their great country. Thus sectarianism becomes an education in nationalism and patriotism. "It develops in the people the geographical sense which enables them to feel the immensity of their mother country pulsating with a common life from end to end in its vast area." Scholars wandered all over the country delivering public lectures aptly called *Carakas* in the *Upaniṣads*. It was these scholars and their social mission of self-sacrifice and service to people that achieved the spread of learning all over the country. The *Vedas* originating in the north gradually spread to all parts of the country up to the south where it took root. The South became the home of Vedic learning. This communication from mouth to mouth became the potent instrument of popular education in patriotism and nationalism, in religion and politics."

"The geographical conception of the identity and individuality of the country in all its vastness and variety led to the conception of its political unification under one sovereignty. The ideal of one sovereign ruling the entire country up to its limits is as old as the

Vedas. It was expressed in a variety of terms stated together in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, terms like *Rājādhirāja* or *Samrāṭ* or *Ekarāṭ*. The title of *Samrāṭ* was applied to the kings of eastern India *(Prācyāṁ Diśi)* (in anticipation, perhaps, of Magadha imperialisms). The term *Ekarāṭ* is more significant as applying to the king ruling over the whole country *(Pṛthvī)* up to the sea as its limit" *(samudraparyantasya ekarāḍiti)*. The term is explained by *Sāyaṇa* to mean 'the sole sovereign without a rival' *(niḥsapatno mukhyo rājā)*. The king of eastern peoples' *(praṇaviśāmpatiḥ ekarāṭ tvam)*. This status is achieved by power *(varcasā balena saha)*, *Udihi (uditaḥ prakhyāto bhava.)* The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* prays for the king's rule over an extended territory' *(mahato janarājyasya)*."

Each nation has a destiny to fulfil, each nation has a message to deliver, each nation has a mission to accomplish. From the beginning of our history India has been striving to establish unity in diversity; unity among different races of men, different religious beliefs not by obliterating them but by harmonising them. In this endeavour tolerance and freedom of thought has been its principle article of faith.

Swāmī Vivekānanda writes—

"You will find there also that hidden under the ashes of apparent death, the fire of our national life is yet smouldering and that the life of this nation is religion, its language religion, and its idea religion; and your politics, society, municipality, plague-prevention work, and famine-relief work—all these things will be done as they have been done all along here viz., only through religion; otherwise all your frantic yelling and bewailing will end in nothing" *(Rousing Call to the Hindu Nation* p. 39).

"Each nation has its own peculiar method of work. Some work through politics, some through social reforms, some through other lines. With us, religion is the only ground along which we can move. The English man can understand religion even through politics. Perhaps the American can understand religion even through social reforms. But the Hindu can understand politics when it is given through religion; sociology must come through

religion, everything must come through religion. For that is the theme, the rest are variations in the national life music" (Swāmī Vivekānanda in *Rousing call to the Hindu Nation* p. 39).

According to Aurobindo the reason for unity is 'the inward turn' of the Indian mind being the primary consideration and all else secondary. It is believed that conscious spiritual and cultural unity is indespensable condition without which no enduring unity could be possible. Jawāharalāla Nehru writes most eloquently in his *Discovery of India*—"Though outwardly there was diversity and infinite variety among our people, everywhere there was that tremendous impress of oneness, which held all of us together for ages past, whatever political fate or misfortune had......befallen us. The unity of India was no longer merely an intellectual conception for me; it was an emotional experience which overpowered me. That essential unity had been so powerful that no political division, no disaster or catastrophe had been able to overcome it."

Mahātmā Gāndhī—Religion and Politics—

We now see Mahātmā Gāndhī, a Hindu political saint, who used religious means for the political end, entering into the Indian Politics, leading men of every walk of life, belonging to all races without distinction for securing independence by non-violent methods, fighting the battle of freedom against the then most powerful nation and the British Imperial forces. Gāndhījī believed in the supremacy of the moral law. He declared 'loyalty to the country' to be always subordinate to 'the loyalty to God' (*Young India*, 21. 10. 1921). But today, the process is in reverse gear. He said—"If I seem to take part in politics it is only because politics today encircle us like the coils of a snake from which one cannot get out no matter how one tries. I wish to wrestle with the snake" quoted in his book on *Mahātmā Gāndhī* by Roman Rolland). Again he said that his whole life is saturated with the religious spirit. "My politics and all other activities of mine are derived from my religion. I go further and say that every activity of a man of religion must be derived from his religion because religion means being bound to God, that is to say, God rules

your very breath. If you recognise that truth naturally God regulates every activity of yours" (*Gāndhījī's View of Life* by Candraśaṅkara Śukla p. 133-134). According to Gāndhījī it is needless to divide life into water-tight compartments, religious and other; whereas if a man has true religion in him, it must show itself in the smallest details of life. "The slightest irregularity in sanitary, social and political life, is a sign of spiritual poverty" Gāndhījī's genius for effective leadership like that of George Washington in America—compelled the British at last 'to deliver the goods.' India was declared independent on the 14th of August, 1947.

With that a constituent assembly was formed for the framing of the Indian constitution, many of whose members were religious minded.

Constitution and Secularity—

The constituent assembly framed the Indian constitution, declaring India as Socialist Democratic Republic. This was later amended to include the word 'secular' before the words 'Democaratic Republic' India thus became a Socialist Secular Democratic Republic.

What does the word 'secular' mean ?

Webster's International Dictionary gives the following meaning to the word secular—

"Secularism is a view of life or of any particular matter based on the premise that religion and religious considerations should be ignored or purposely excluded e.g., a policy of strict secularism in government. It is based specially on a system of social ethics and conduct which should be determined exclusively with reference to the present life and social well-being without reference to religion". This could hardly fit in with the Indian view of life, The basic ingredient of secular world view, circulating in scientific, educational, social, cultural and governmental institutions is that matter has independent ontological status. In other words matter exists with or without *Brahma*—The Hindus reject this view. According to Rādhākṛṣṇan matter is real only as part of the whole. This is based on the distinction between

existence and reality. Matter has no independent existence, as it is becoming of the Supreme Being. Matter exists thus as a relative reality as a part of the whole. *Īśāvāsyamidaṁ sarvaṁ*.........shows that this relative reality is related to the Supreme *Īśa*, the Absolute, but for whom 'all this' does not exist. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* says—"that is full" and 'this is full.' "In Einstein's theory matter cannot be separated from the field of gravity, and the field of gravity cannot be separated from the curved space. Matter and space are thus seen to be inseparable and inter-dependent parts of a single whole" *(Tao in Physics* by Capra p. 194-195). As he spreads the entire space, He becomes the absolute of the space itself. When He withdraws from space, matter must also disappear as they are inseparable. This material world (or the relative reality) is matter spread over space with His Being. It is real only to that extent. When He withdraws from it, both space and matter disappear; He transcends both. According to Bohm, each part of the real world contains the whole. He sees mind and matter as interdependent and co-related but not causally connected. They are mutually enfolding projections of a higher reality which is neither matter nor consciousness. World is a dynamic web of relations having a central order.

Secularism—Indian View—

In India, religion and philosophy are deeply embedded; every act, be it political, social, cultural, religious or otherwise is impressed with this faith. There is nothing higher than religious ideal. This is the key-note of Indian life. It is the only possible means of his work. All else is suicidal. His philosophy of one existence; to find one in the many and the many in the one has made his life one of sacrifice, and way to the eternal home.

Rādhākṛṣṇan says—"Religion is not irrelevent to life.........
Only a living faith in God will enable man to overcome the paralysing sense of despair and create a less imperfect society. *(Present Crisis of Faith* p. 14-15). Saints are not stained glass figures, remote and ethereal in their sanctity, he says (*Ibid* p. 23). In the history of Hinduism it was not the state or the Church, but the great *Ṛṣis,* saints and sages that from time to time adjusted

Dharma of the age to the growing ideas and needs of the time. Thus in this age we have a Gāndhī who dressed politics with the garb of religion and spirituality. To him political activity was only a means for the realization of truth (his inner voice as he would say often); for truth is God. Non-violence was used by him not as a weapon of attack, but a means of reaching his own inner voice and also for the defence of the country.

Secularism is another term for materialism. It is the philosophy long before thrown out from the Indian concept of religion. It is a Western plant now sought to be implanted on Indian soil. Its essential nature is meticulous avoidence of religion or religious consideration. Toleration of religion is not secularism; it is anything but secularism.

Two things distinguish the normal Western mind—the cult of the enquiring, defining, effective, practical reason and the other is the cult of life. Church failed to spiritualize Europe, because it ran counter to the prime idea of industrialization and the development of physical sciences, and consequently reason too. But in India there was neither predominance of reason and life cult nor any incompatibility of these two with the religious spirit.

Thus in the West everything must pass through the crucible of life and reason; but in India it is through the spirituality which alone evokes in her the higher powers of mind and life. Those who turn away from the Lord are called *Ātmahana* or *Ātma*-killers in *Īśopaniṣad* verse 3.

"The West secularised life and annihilated religion. Religion became more and more pale and ever thinning shadow pushed aside into a small corner of the life and still smaller corner of the nature and awaiting sentence of death or exile."

This attitude to life, developed in the West a temperament and outlook of intolerance. Life is to be enjoyed rationally and forcibly according to our power. Ecstatic spiritual asceticism is an offence to the reason, almost a crime according to them. When the Western mind is confronted with the Indian religion, it finds that all its standards are denied, exceeded or belittled; all that it honours is given a second place, all that it has rejected is still held

in honour. "Here is a country which is still heavily coloured with the ochre tint of the garb of the *Saṁnyāsī* where the beyond is still preached as a truth and men have a living belief in other worlds and reincarnation and a whole army of antique ideas whose truth is quite unverifiable by the instruments of physical science. The idea of the *Dharma* is, next to the idea of the infinite, its major chord; *Dharma,* next to spirit is its foundation of life. There is no ethical idea which it has not stressed, put in its most ideal and imperative form, enforced by teaching, injunction, parable, artistic creation, formative examples. Truth, honour, loyalty, fidelity, courage, chastity, love, long suffering, self-sacrifice, harmlessness, forgiveness, compassion, benevolence, beneficence are its common themes; are in its view the very stuff of a right human life, the essence of man's *Dharma.* "Morality is for the Western mind mostly a thing of outward conduct; but conduct for the Indian mind is only one means of expression and sign of a soul-state. Hinduism only incidentally strings together number of commandments for observance, a table of moral laws; more deeply it enjoins a spiritual or ethical purity of the mind with action as one outward index" (*Ibid* p. 90-91).

We thus see that the exclusion of religion and religious consideration out of the governmental activities as though religion is untouchable to the politicians, is certainly not the view of Indian life. Secularism stemming from atheism or agnosticism is not a religion or religious ideal but only a policy for the Government of the country, in the West, which later on became an obsession or fetish, in the proper development of man. In the West when the state becomes secular, there is no duty cast on the state to protect religion or religious faith of any citizen or community. The state is unconcerned with religion. But in India in as much as a fundamental right having been created or conferred on the religious minorities to preach and practise their religion, there ensues a corresponding duty on the state to enforce or atleast to protect those fundamental rights. In such situation the word 'secular' in our constitution becomes a mere shibboleth or a misnomer, for the essence of secularism according to the

dictionary is a total and deliberate exclusion of religion and religious belief and not purposeful inclusion or a permissive consent. Added to that we have separate identities of various ethnic groups perpetuated, enjoying a degree of autonomy. This rebels against the concept of strict secularism. The revival of religio-ethnic groups in America and other Western nations seems to be a post modern phenomenon. Perhaps the concept of secularism an agnostic concept, is fast becoming untenable in the light of more stable and enduring concept of religion as in India.

"The ideals that strive to take form of social institutions have two objects—one is to regulate our passions and appetite for the harmonious development of man, and the other is to help him to cultivate disinterested love for his fellow creatures. Therefore society is the expression of those moral and spiritual aspirations of man which belong to his higher nature "*(Nationalism* p. 72). Conferring of fundamental rights on any religious community purely on the basis of religion makes them segregate and move away from the rest and this acts as a mill-stone hanging heavy clogging the wheels of progress. Social co-operation becomes divorced from a harmonious society of the future. These and similar rights may remain as a detterent against the future integrated society envisaged in the preamble to the constitution. We cannot ignore the influence of religion in Indian society; that has to be acknowledged and harnessed by mutual co-operation and active accommodation.

"Secularism in the Indian constitution only means that the state does not actively support any particular religion but deals impartially with all religions" says Rādhākrṣnan. It adopts the philosophy of co-existence of the various religions in this vast country; a tolerance with knowledge of difference in which the state takes no conscious part, so that absorption and assimilation may become possible consistent with *Dharma*. What we need today is not segregation of religion or religious ideals or religious consideration from any aspect of our social, political, or any other activity of life but the inculcation of strict principles of morality *(Ugraṁ Ṛtam)* and ethics in everyday life. If religion is shunted

out of activity of life then India may run the risk of becoming a society of unprincipled bed-fellows. Anarchy may be the result. Secularism has never been accepted in India as a way of life. The University Commission presided over by Dr. Rādhākṛṣṇan said—"Where conscious purpose is lacking, personal integrity and consistent behaviour are not possible,. if we exclude spiritual training in our institutions we would be untrue to our whole historical development" (p. 301). Hence he suggested silent meditation and study of inspiring books. Children should be equipped with certain amount of intellectual and even spiritual wealth with its aesthetic accompaniment. The Educational Policies Commission in America, advocated religious education in a pamphlet on '*moral and spiritual values in public schools*" (vide *The Hindu Symbology* by Swāmī Swāhānanda p. 265-266). The more man acquires powers of a material nature the more does he find himself in need of spirituality.

Dharma is both *Satya* and *Satyam*—truth and its law; both are eternal and therefore *Sanātana*.

Secularism, Democracy and Christianity—

Secular democracy is not intended to make men 'human beings' for such beings exist no where.

The Indian constitution is a charter given by the people of India to themselves and the reservation of freedom of speech, religion etc., in that is provided for the full growth of the Indian people through stimulation of their thinking and initiative. India is converted by them as a vast laboratory of human development for the seventh of the human race, in a milieu of freedom and equality and the sacredness of human personality. "This is the meaning of India declaring herself a secular state" says—Swāmī Raṅganāthānanda.

Swāmījī now makes a very significant statement. He says—"The vast majority of those who met in the Constituent Assembly in Delhi and voted the Indian constitution in 1949 were religious and not irreligious. And yet they adopted the principles and policies of a secular constitution for their deeply religious country. We should not fail to note the significance of this"

Swāmījī then cites Rādhākṛṣṇan's statement in *Recovery of Faith* (1904 ed. 184).

"When India is said to be a secular state, it does not mean that we reject the reality of an unseen spirit or the relevance of religion to life or that we exalt irreligion. It does not mean that secularism itself becomes a positive religion or that the state assumes divine prerogatives. Though faith in the Supreme is the basic principle of Indian tradition the Indian state will not identify itself with or be controlled by any particular religion. We hold that no one religion should be accorded special privileges in national life or international relations for that would be a violation of the basic principles of democracy and contrary to the best interests of religion and government. This view of religious impartiality or comprehension and forbearance has a prophetic role to play within the national and the international life. No group of citizens shall arrogate to itself, rights and privileges which it denies to others. No person should suffer any form of disability or discrimination because of his religion but all alike should be free to share to the fullest degree in the common life. This is the basic principle involved in the separation of Church and state. The religious opportunity of the Indian state is not to be confused with secularism or atheism. Secularism as here defined is in accordance with the ancient religious tradition of India. It tries to build up a fellowship of believers and not by subordinating individual qualities to the group mind but bringing them into harmony with each other. This dynamic fellowship is based on the principle of diversity in unity which alone has the quality of creativeness."

According to Rādhākṛṣṇan religious fellowship is possible, not by imposition of any one way on the whole world but through an all-inclusive recognition that we are all searchers for the truth, pilgrims on the road, that we all aim at the same ethical and spiritual standards (*Ibid* 185).

In St. Xavier College VS. State of Gujarat the question arose regarding the amplitude of article 30 of the constitution, reserving the right of the minority to run their educational institutions. Justice Khannā, observed—

"India is the second most populous country of the world. The people inhabiting this vast land profess different religions and speak different languages. Despite the diversity of religion, there runs through the fabric of the nation the golden thread of a basic innate unity. It is a mosaic of different religions, languages and cultures. Each of them has made a mark on the Indian polity and India today represents a synthesis of them all" (A. I. R. 1974 Supreme Court 1389 at page 1413).

Preamble and Constitution—

Be it however noted that the preamble to the constitution as originally framed by the Constituent Assembly did not contain the expression 'socialist secular' democracy. All it said was Sovereign Democratic Republic. It provided freedom of expression, belief, faith and worship. It is an omnibus clause applying to all communities and individuals evidently the purpose being as stated in the preamble itself. "Fraternity, assuming the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation". In spite of the absence of the word 'Socialist Secular' the Supreme Court in 1974, in the case referred to above, proceeded on the basis that our state breathed the air of secularism. In 1976 the preamble was amended (by 42nd amendment) to include these words 'Socialist Secular' and 'integrity' to the preamble. However these words 'socialist' and 'secular' are vague expressions needing interpretation, which was significantly absent in the constitution. H. M. Seervai in his book *Constitutional Law of India* (4th edn.) at page 276 remarks—"It (socialist) is a word of many meanings and its appropriation by the Soviet Union would seem to suggest a socialist form of government can be a dictatorship which is foreign to our constitution.

He adds—"The word 'secular' is not precise and would itself require to be defined. Secular may be opposed to 'religious' in the sense that a secular state can be anti-religious state. In this sense the constitution of India is not secular, because the right to the freedom of religion is a guarenteed fundamental right. The word 'secular' may mean that as far as the state is concerned, it does not support any religion out of public funds, nor does it penalise

the profession and practice of any religion or the right to manage religious institutions as provided by art. 25 and 26. The secular nature of our constitution has to be gathered from these and other articles of our constitution, like the articles relating to a common citizenship (Part II) and articles 15, 16 and 29 (2)" (*Ibid* p.277). I am afraid even art. 25 and 26 goes against the true spirit of secularism. In 1978, the constitution (45th) amendment Bill, 1978 was introduced, wherein an attempt was made to define the word 'secular as to mean' a republic in which there is equal respect for all religions'. The amendment was not accepted by the Council of States. Consequently the word 'secular' remained undefined. Probably the founding fathers of the constitution, many of whom were religious advisedly omitted the term 'secular' from the constitution and the preamble thereto, knowing full well that the life and mind of our people was steeped in religion and far removed from materialistic concepts (Vide *Constituent Assembly Debates Book 5,* No, 5, Vol. X-XII. Index p. 450).

The preamble to the constitution as originally framed was sought to be amended in the course of the second reading in the constituent assembly by adding the words 'In the name of God' at the beginning of the preamble and also by another amendment by a new preamble containing the word 'secular' in it. But this was disallowed by the majority of the members of the assembly, on the ground that if allowed it would in effect amount to imposing the belief of some on non-believers. The same argument must sustain the rejection of the amendment relating to new preamble containing the word 'secular'. However provision is made in the oath to be administered to the members in the name of God and to non-believers by taking oath affirming the 'constitution'. This has in due course resulted in the public morality standing discounted.

Rādhākṛṣṇan on Secularism—

Rādhākṛṣṇan explaining the concept of secularism in India states that in India it means that state is not identified with anyone faith, but protects and respects all faiths so long as their followers do not behave in a way which is an outrage on moral

conscience or becomes a danger to the integrity of the country. Secularism attempts to remove religious rivalries *(The Present Crisis of Faith* p. 111-112). However, he says that in spite of the state being secular, it has not given up or failed to recognise higher laws of the universe which govern the physical world of space and time. It has not accepted the philosophy of materialism—of worship of material comforts and luxuries in lieu of its true old philosophy built on long tradition (*Ibid* 152). The philosopher however omits to note that the function of a modern state is purely political and has nothing to do with the belief or faith of its citizens. It forbears from interfering with the belief of the citizen in the 'higher life of the individual'. In age-old day no distinction was made between religion and politics. Today politics has divorced religion and hence secular nature arises for consideration. Our state is not governed by rules of *Dharma* but only by political mandate and very often it is a matter of political power crumbling man's innate nature.

Dharma as a Code of Conduct—Assimilation and Absorption—

The code of conduct must be *Dharma—"dhāraṇādharma ityāhuḥ"*. What binds or holds together is called *Dharma.* Rādhākṛṣṇan exhorts men to work with faith and weld together our people into a single corporate community and make them the defenders of peace. Authentic saints speak the language of peace. They communicate the peace that is not of this world. The key word in the whole preamble, 'the bull's eye' it wants to hit is the 'integrity' of the nation. What does integrity mean ? The word arose from 'integer' which means; 'the whole of anything; whole number as opposed to a fraction or a mixed number'. Integrity' is the state of being entire, where all fractions dissolve. The aim of the constitution is thus to reach or reshape a society into an integral society, where all differences do not exist. The absorbing and assimilative' nature of the Aryan race, blurred all differences between the Aryans and the Dravidians that today no single community can claim itself exclusively Aryan or Dravidian. It has united to form a single community called Hindu. This has to be again translated into further action for greater assimilation of all

religions in India—the Christian, the Islam, the Buddhist etc., with Hinduism.

The inner principle of Hinduism, the most tolerant and receptive of religious systems is not sharply exclusive like the religious spirit of Christianity or Islam as far as that could be without loss of its own powerful idiosyncracy and law of being, it has been synthetic, acquisitive, inclusive. Always it has taken in from every side and trusted to the power of assimilation that burns in its spiritual heart and in the whit heat of the flaming centre to turn even the most uncompromising material into forms for its spirits" *(The Foundations of Indian Culture* by Aurobindo p. 76). The atheists and the agnostics were free from persecution in India. Every religion even unorthodox, lived freely side by side with the orthodox creeds and philosophies. Their truths assimilated wherever possible and the ageless continuity of spiritual experience maintained. In later times the saints who reached some fusion of the Hindu and the Islamic teaching were freely and immediately recognised as the leaders of Hindu religion—even in some cases when they started with a Mussalmāna birth and from the Mussalmāna stand point (*Ibid* p. 131).

Christianity in India—

In his introduction to *The Message of the Upaniṣads,* Swāmī Raṅganāthānanda writes—

"Christianity in India today is experiencing a thought-ferment from the impact of *Vedānta,* whose scientific terminology in the field of religion is steadily invading its exposition and presentation in sermons and books. This is resulting in a steady release of Indian Christianity from its rigid *Smṛti* elements and its steady conversion into a wholly positive spiritual force proceeding from its *Śruti* nucleus keen to respond to the positive spiritual forces of her sister faiths with a view to meeting the spiritual challenges of the industrial age".

Indian Islam—

Swāmījī now considers the impact of the *Upaniṣads* on Indian Islamic religion.

The conflict between the progressive and the reactionary is bound to invade Indian Islam also as it has already invaded Arab

Islam. Due to the exegencies of its birth, Pakistan Islam may experience it somewhat later. Earlier or later no religion or society today be it Muslim, Christian or Hindu, can escape the inquisitive, and often irreverent questioning and peering by increasing sections of its intelligent youths, both girls and boys, educated and nurtured in modern thought. The searchlight of critical thought will soon be systematically directed by the thoughtful Indian Muslims on their religious traditions with a view to finding out what is essential, and separating what is absolute in them, as it was directed earlier by free-minded Christians on Christianity and free minded Hindus on Hinduism.

This may result either in secularization of realigion or the spiritualization of the secular life of man. So far as Indian Muslims are concerned Swāmījī says that the total Indian social situation conditioned by the Indian culture will considerably influence them. Many scholars, both Hindu and Muslim, have expressed their conviction that the spiritual core of Islam is in perfect accord with the philosophy and vision of Hinduism itself. Progressive evolution of Indian Islam will be stamped with the Indian spiritual genius."

Swāmījī now concludes his observations perhaps with the vision of a dreamer, that when the Indian Islam avails of these circumstances, it will capture a forward looking mood and temper and that dynamic capacity for assimilation of new ideas which it manifested in the middle east in the heyday of its glory under the Caliphate. "This then" says Swāmījī "will bring the higher mind of Islam under the spell of *Vedānta*" and "new commentaries on the Koran in the light of the *Upaniṣads* will ensue. This is the glorious future before the Indian Islam today."

In India because of the recognised freedom of the mind and expression however limited in practice, new ideas are not foreclosed. They can be considered and can be accepted far more than in other countries which is a more right and dogmatic outlook on life. The essential ideals of Indian culture are broad based and can be adapted to almost any environment.

The ultimate aim or the bed-rock of our constitution appears to be the building up of an 'integral' society, associating with it all

its various and variegated limbs through the adoption of *Dharmic* principles in the administration of the government, as the means of reaching that far off dream. We may fix our berth in heaven, but let us not ignore the fact that we are on earth plodding to reach that destination.

In Sum—

In sum our nationality and the perfect unity was founded and built by great *Ṛṣis* of yore not on the quicksand of expediency but on a firmer and enduring ground of faith in God, religions and more in man. As religion is a life to be lived not a theory to be accepted or a belief to be adhered to, it allows scope to varied approaches to the divine. There may be different revelations of the divine, but they are all forms of the Supreme. "To hear the melodies of spirit we must shut off the noise of the world" says Rādhākṛṣṇan. This is only to open up our inner eye to spiritual realities. True religion expresses itself in love and aim at the unity of mankind. The Hindu dreamed of universal peace and clothed his dreams with imperishable language.

mātā ca pārvatī devī pitā devo maheśvaraḥ ।
bāndhavāḥ śivabhaktāśca svadeśo bhuvanatrayam ॥
udāra-caritānāṁ tu vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam ॥

Who else other than Śaṅkara the great monist would declare this for the whole of the Hindu-fold, claiming the whole world as one native land and himself a citizen of the world. The aim of the Hindus is to build world-unity or a world-empire. '*lokāḥ samastā sukhino bhavantu*'—is the ordinary and daily prayer of all Hindus.

How prophetically Aurobindo said, even before we accepted democracy as a form of government. He said—

"What I mean by acceptance of the effective idea of democracy—the thing itself, never fully worked out was present as an element in ancient Indian as in ancient European polity and society—is that I find its inclusion in our future way of living, in some shape, to be a necessity of our growth. What I mean by assimilation, is that we must not take it crudely in the European forms, but must go back to whatever corresponds to it, illuminates its sense, justifies its highest purport in our own

spiritual conception of life and existence, and in that light work out its extent, degree, form, relation to other ideas, applications. To everything I would apply the same principle, to each in its own kind, after its proper *Dharma*, in its right measure of importance, its spiritual, intellectual, ethical, aesthetic, dynamic utility" (*Foundations of Indian Culture* by Aurobindo p. 389).

Again he said—"If we take over for instance that terrible, monstrous and compelling thing that great *Asuric* creation, European industrialism—unfortunately we are being forced by circumstances to do it–whether we take it in its form or its principle, we may under more favourable conditions develop by it our wealth and economic resources but assuredly we shall get too its social discords and moral plagues and cruel problems, and I do not see how we shall avoid becoming the slaves of the economic aim in life and losing the spiritual principle of our culture" (*Ibid* p. 388).

What Aurobindo feared is happening before us as stark reality. We have developed social discords and moral plagues' within the society and a deterioration if not a complete loss of our moral and spiritual values in life too. Secularism as a material concept has accentuated the process of moral degradation. Democracy cannot flourish in an atmosphere of suppression, mutual distrust and authoritarianism. Religion with *Dharmic* principles as guide shall remain relevent for our development and unity of the nation. Let us not become politically corrupt but remain as moral exemplars, for the nation can remain united only under such persons, provided they are tolerant and spiritually inclined. *Dharma* shall govern man as well as the state. *Dharma* is both truth as well as law., and that is religion too in India. Liberation is not freedom from foreign domination but also freedom from the native bureaucrats too who take the place of their foreign counterparts.

What ails India today ? All of us suffer from the consequences of ourselves: double values and double loyalties. Those who govern and those who are governed cannot usefully and effectively communicate. A gap yawns; a situation brought about by selfishness and excessive thirst to become somehow rich at the expense of others, no matter how; there is a total loss of morality

and public ethical life. No body can change the life style of another. Each must drink his own medicine. "To divide mankind into spiritual and secular is what demoniac people do; it is dualism and not *Advaita*" says John Spiers. He adds—"We want to invite tourists to fill our coffers and ask them to visit our ancient holy temples. Meanwhile the actual inheritors of the true *Ṛṣis* of old, the teachers of true philosophy are neglected under the pretext that India is a secular state. What a humbug. He asks.

Religion and spirituality do not stand apart in India. "If the cultural progress may be defined as the growth of spirituality both in individuals and society as a whole, its regress is expressed in lack or decline of such spirituality. And this is not compensated by material well-being, In the developed capitalist countries the ordinary person is surrounded by an abundance of consumer goods, but society as a whole is in the midst of a moral crisis. Crime, drug addiction, mental sickness and even suicide are on the increase" says Alexander Spirkins in *Dialectical Materialism*. Again he says—"In many respects politics determines the vector of the forces of both civilization and culture". The minds of the makers of culture have been guided by the desire to achieve an understanding and a rational transformation of the human being himself, his bodily and spiritual organisation, the preservation and strengthening of his health. Socio-political, philosophical, religious, moral, aesthetic and all cultural efforts in general have tended towards this goal.

Rāma, the guardian and the embodiment of *Dharma*, having been exiled and with him *Dharma* too from public life, we shall have to wait for his return in order to establish his *Rāmarājya* and thus for the fulfilment, of the dream of the father of the nation.

ṛtasya panthāṁ na taranti duṣkṛtaḥ ।

(*Ṛgveda*. IX. 73. 6)

"The evil doers do not travel on the path of Eternal Law."

I conclude this brief sketch on secularism and the Indian way of life with the fervent, emotional and eloquent appeal made by John Spiers, a native of Scotland and yet a lover of India in his book *What India Means to Me,* written in 1966, and wherein he gives his vision of India. He says—"India has achieved one side of her goal—

political independence. What of the other side ? What of spiritual independence ? Her own native genius, her grand heritage of spirituality, is it to be thrown away just when it could be of the greatest service, not only to her own needs but humanity as well ?"

"The ideal of the Indian people is inner as well as outer freedom, food outside and freedon within, an uncluttered plain economy based on abundance of actual foods, and not paper money in the bank which is worthless and less as time goes on, to be devalued again and again, and which nobody except a white ant, can eat. But with abundance there comes the leisure for discovering the peace and happiness that comes from a satisfied belly and an untroubled mind."

"If all this is going to be thrown to the dogs, overshadowed by all this rubbishy life of whisky bottles and entertainments, then India is lost, and becomes only a dependency of the world of the West. The man seeking spirituality will be considered a deviant if not a criminal, and will be arrested as a penniless vagrant as he is in the states of Western Europe, Russia or the USA."

"I am not pessimistic however, because time itself as an aspect of the Absolute, has a way of solving such problems as this present age is passing through. These ultra-modern states are full of their own poison which will kill them. Life saves itself at the last minute. Spirituality has never been lost to humanity, although it may withdraw, and bend like the soft grass before the onset of the coming storms."

"In giving you my vision of what India means to me, you may think me outmoded and too idealist. But it is better to have the highest ideals rather than the lowest, and only the highest has suited India, and it is with that spirit that I find myself in agreement. I invoke the remembrance of the Absolute in the sacred formula *Aum Tat Sat* and close with that little word which has been repeated millions and millions of times until it is part of the consciousness of all in this dear land —

Om Śāntiḥ Śāntiḥ

Dharma of a Friend

A friend is to be distressed to see the distress of a friend. A man should regard his own mountain-like troubles as of no more account than a mere grain of sand, while the troubles of a friend should appear to him like mount Sumeru, though really they may be as trifling as a grain of sand. Those fools who are not of such a temperament presume in vain to make friendship with anybody. A friend should restrain his companion from the evil path and lead him on the path of virtue; he should proclaim the latter's good points and screen his faults.

A friend should give and take things without any scruple and serve his friend's interest to the best of his ability and finding him in distress love him a hundred times more than ever. The *Vedas* declare these to be the qualities of a noble friend.

He, however who contrives to speak bland words to your face and harms you behind your back and harbours some evil design in his heart, and whose mind is as tortuous as the movements of a snake is an unworthy of friend and one had better bid good-bye to such a friend.

—Rāmacaritamānasa

The Pilot

The sun is set, the gloom has spread
And all my friends are gone.
Upon this dreary shore of life,
I wander all alone.

I weave a garland of my dreams
The stars are twinkling clear and bright.
The fragrant breeze is blowing sweet
The Champaka odours fail to night.

Where Māyā's lute is calm and mute
Where passions roar no more,
O Pilot, lead my shatter'd bark
To that uncharted shore.

—Dr. Jai Narain Mallick

Number of Saṁskāras in Sanātana Dharma

The word *Saṁskāra* is a derivation from the verb root 'कृ' with 'सम्' as prefix. So it means *Saṁskaraṇa*. 'संस्करणं संस्कारः' 'सम्' means 'in all possible ways' and 'कृ' means 'to do' or 'to act'. While we do or act upon, a certain thing in all possible way by all possible means, this frequency of action or every possible care leaves a permanent impression behind it. That is collectively called 'संस्कार'. Our present life is most likely the effect of our past *Saṁskāras*. There is a good deal of difference between *Saṁskāra* and *Prārabdha*. Both are in a way, the result of our past deeds, good or bad, but *Saṁskāras* influence and mould our mental disposition, temperament and aptitude whereas *Prārabdha* is the agent for providing pains and pleasures in form of our fructified actions.

This was about our past *Saṁskāras* or latent impressions on our subtle mind. Now let us see what it means in regard of future. Before going to cook our food we look into the food grains and remove unwanted materials. That is *Saṁskāra* of the food grains. I have a blunt knife. I take it to the grinding stone and grind it. Now it is sharpened. I have a raw gem. I take it to a gem-cutter, get it cut and polished. In each of the above quoted cases the value and utility of the thing has been enhanced. This is *Saṁskāra* for improving the future. The sixteen Hindu *Saṁskāras* must be looked at in the same light. The whole Hindu way of living is a process of refinement which goes on continuing even after death. Let us have a look into these. Only then we will be able to realise their benedictory importance.

The main authority for the *Saṁskāras* are the *Gṛhya Sūtras*. The number of *Saṁskāras* in the *Gṛhya Sūtras* vary between twelve and eighteen. But in the course of time, sixteen became the classical number. *Pārāśara Gṛhya Sūtras* have mentioned the following *Saṁskāras*—

1. *Garbhādhāna* (Conception)
2. *Puṁsavana* (Engendering a male issue)
3. *Sīmantāyana* (Parting the hair)
4. *Jātakarma* (Natal Rites)
5. *Nāmakaraṇa* (Naming)
6. *Niṣkramaṇa* (First outing)
7. *Annaprāśana* (First feeding with boiled rice)
8. *Cūḍākarma* (Tonsure)
9. *Karṇa Vedha* (Piercing the ear lobes)
10. *Vidyārambha* (Learning the alphabet)
11. *Upanayana* (Holy thread ceremony) initiation
12. *Samāvartana* (Returning home)
13. *Vivāha* (Marriage)
14. *Vānaprastha* (Retirement to forest)
15. *Saṁnyāsa* (Leading an ascetic life)
16. *Antyeṣṭi (Funeral Rites)*

1. Garbhādhāna Saṁskāra—

The very first *Saṁskāra* is known as *Garbhādhāna*. It literally means placing the seed in the womb. This *Saṁskāra* is performed according to *Ṛgveda Mantra* by which the seed in the womb gives rise to life in the forms of the *Annamaya* and *Prāṇamaya Kośas*. This *Saṁskāra* is very important from the cultural and racial heritage standpoint and, thus the very basis of eugenics.

2. Puṁsavana Saṁskāra—

The child in the womb is consecrated by this second *Saṁskāra* called *Puṁsavana*. It is performed in the third or fourth month of pregnancy, on a day when the moon is in a male constellation, particularly the *Puṣya*. In this *Saṁskāra* the parents take a vow that they will not indulge in any activity which may harm the foetus.

3. Sīmantāyana Saṁskāra—

In this *Saṁskāra* detailed rules of eugenics and hygiene are prescribed for the pregnant woman and her husband. These rules make it clear that according to *Sanātana Dharma* every possible care had to be taken to preserve the health of the pregnant woman and her unborn child.

4. Jātakarma Saṁskāra—

This *Saṁskāra* ceremony is made up of several items and is generally performed before severing the navel cord. The child is fed with ghee and honey. These substances are symbolic of strength and intelligence. This speaks for the high concern of the ancient *Ṛṣis* for the intellectual well-being of the child.

5. Nāmakaraṇa Saṁskāra—

The choice of the name for the child is made. It is often connected with religious ideas though there are also other considerations. Sometimes the first letter of the name is normally based on the child's horoscope.

6. Niṣkramaṇa Saṁskāra—

This *Saṁskāra* is the name given to taking the child out of the house for the very first time. Every important step in the life of the child's progress should be a festive occasion for its parents. The ceremony ends with the father making the child look at the sun, with the sound of a conch shell and the chanting of Vedic hymns.

7. Annaprāśana Saṁskara—

This *Saṁskāra* is the action of the first solid food being given to the child. It marks the weaning of the child from its mother's milk. It is performed between six to eight months after the birth of the child.

8. Cūḍākarma Saṁskāra—

This is the eighth *Saṁskāra,* the purpose of which is longevity of the child's life. The most distinguishing feature of the sacrament is the tuft of hair at the crown. Life is prolonged by tonsure and shortened without it. This is performed at the end of the first year or before the end of third or fifth or seventh year.

Karṇavedha Saṁskāra—

Karṇavedha is a sacrament connected with piercing the ears. Śuśruta says that the ears of a child are to be pierced for protection and ornamentation. He explicitly prescribed this sacrament for the prevention of hydrocele and hernia.

10. Vidyārambha Saṁskāra—

This is the tenth sacrament and marks the beginning of regular education or learning of the alphabet.

11. Upanayana Saṁskāra—

In this sacrament of investiture of the student with the *Yajñopavīta* (sacred thread) is made. The *Ācārya* (teacher) performs this ceremony with an appropriate *Mantra* asking for the recipient's long-life, purity, strength and illumination. The most sacred Gāyatrī is taught to the student. After such iniciation the student becomes eligible for studying *Vedas*.

12. Samāvartana Saṁskāra—

This *Saṁskāra* is performed when the student returns to his home from the *Āśrama* of his *Guru* after completing his studies. The return home is a very momentous event in a student's life because then he is judged ready to enter the life of the householder. First the student seeks the permission of the *Ācārya* his *Guru* and the permission is preceded by the student offering his *Guru Dakṣiṇā* by reverently approaching him. This sacrament is known as *Samāvartana* and correspond to university convocation of the modern age.

13.Marriage or Vivāha—

The Hindu marriage is not a contract but a sacrament. This marriage is regarded as indissoluble. There is no provision for divorce. The *Saptapadī Mantras* are a series of beautiful vows to be followed in their married life. Main rites are—

(1) *Kanyā Dāna* (2) *Vivāha Homa* (3) *Pāṇigrahaṇa* (4) *Hṛdaya Sparśa* (5) *saptapadī* (6) *Aśmārohaṇa* (7) *Sūryāvalokana* and (8) *Dhruva Darśana.*

14. Vānaprastha Saṁskāra—

This starts when one has performed all one's duties and has sons and grandchildren. Then, one must give up the habit of acquisition and retire into the forest or a secluded place to cultivate the habit of renunciation. This is a life of austerities.

15. Saṁnyāsa—

While in the former stage i.e., *Vānaprastha* by the continuous life of discipline an individual succeeds in obtaining full control over his sense organs and his desires. He must then take up a *Saṁnyasī's* life for the benefit of mankind. The life of total renunciation is *Saṁnyāsa*.

16. Antyeṣṭī or the Funeral rites—

This is the last sacrament. Though performed after death, this is no less important. To a Hindu, the value of the next world is higher than that of the present. The son, consecrates the parents cremation with proper sacraments.

The seers and sages tried to transform the crude human into a retired man with the help of these sacraments. These *Saṁskāras* were instituted to create the conditions required for the development of twice-born Hindus, in order that he may lead a happy life here in this world to the blessedness hereafter.

The Lord is unfathomable as a myriad Pātālas and dreadful as a myriad Yamas. He is as sanctifying as countless millions of sacred places; nay, His very name obliterates all one's accumulated sins. The Hero of Raghu's line is as immovable as a myriad Himalayas and as deep as a myriad seas. The Lord is as liberal in bestowing all one's cherished objects as a myriad cows of plenty. He is as sharp as countless millions of Śāradās and possesses the creative skill of a myriad *Brahmās*. Again, He is as good a preserver as a myriad Viṣṇus and as thorough a destroyer as a myriad Rudras. He is as rich as a myriad Kuberas and as capable of bringing forth material universes as a myriad *Māyās*. He is as good a supporter (of the universes) as a myriad *Śeṣas*. In short, Lord Śrī Rāma, the sovereign of the universe, is infinite and incomparable (in every respect).

—*Mānasa* (VII. 92. 1—8)

Enjoying the various pleasures of sense by means of the senses illuminated by the (said) inner controller, the embodied soul identifies itself with this created body and gets attached to it. Performing with the organs of action, actions prompted by interested motives and reaping the agreeable and disagreeable consequences of his varied actions (of past lives), the embodied soul revolves in this whirligig (of mundane life). Thus undergoing (various) forms of existence brought about by his (past) actions and carrying many evils (with them), the soul helplessly goes through (repeated) births and deaths till the final dissolution of creation

Bhāgavata (XI. 3. 5—7)

The Universality of Sanātana Dharma

—*Dr. V. Ramamurthy 'Renu'*

अयं निजः परो वेति गणना लघुचेतसाम्।
उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्॥

"This is mine, this belongs to others; this type of discriminatory approach betrays the narrow mentality of people, whereas the broad minded ones look upon the entire universe as their own family."

The *Sanātana Dharma* or *The Law Eternal* is based on this dictum of identification of the individual with every component of the world—animate or inanimate, good or bad, material or spiritual. This was because the Indian genius comprehended the entire universe as *Brahma,* the one indivisible ocean of blissful nectar divine, putting an end to all discriminations, prejudices or favours.

किं हेयं किमुपादेयं किमन्यत्कं विलक्षणम्।
अखण्डानन्दपीयूषपूर्णे ब्रह्ममहार्णवे॥

(Bhagavatpāda Ādyaśaṅkarācārya)

This grand conception, the oneness of universe, forms the very bed-rock of *Sanātana Dharma,* the fragrant flower of the Indian spiritual thinking, spread over times immemorial. As the very word *Sanātana* implies, this Law *(Dharma)* is Eternal, one without either beginning or logically any end. It cuts across all barriers of time, space, circumstances, castes, creeds, tribes, cultures etc., and proclaims the entire universe an indivisible Power Supreme (सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म) where it was likened to a single nest harbouring millions and billions of souls unified with mutual love and fraternity (यत्र विश्वं भवत्येकनीडम्).

Dharma Sanātana is not at all an institution like several other religions as understood and preached, now a days, by selfish fundamentalists and bigots, in different names, all over the

world. It is a way of life based on principles of harmony, mutual understanding, love, service, sacrifice for others, disciplined life and kindness towards fellow beings. It was not started and spread by any mortal being. It existed along with the creation. It is the quintessence of *Vedas*—the very breath of the Power Supreme *(Brahma)* the earliest of scriptures agreed upon by scholars all over the world. In a nut shell its message is, live and let live; be good and do good.' It abhors darkness, embraces light, shuns all falsehood, soars high for truth, fights out death and fecilitates immortality—

असतो मा सद्गमय !
तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय !
मृत्योर्माऽमृतं गमय !

Without realising this unique catholicity of *Sanātana Dharma*, many of the modern scholars—both western and western-minded Indians—level many a meaningless and unjust criticism—of course out of lack of proper understanding of the Indian scriptures—that the Indians were a lot of heathens who worshipped petty gods, snakes, ghosts, trees, stones, animals, birds etc., without a centralised single object of divinity and hence theirs was a very primitive, crude, outdated and uncultured way of life. Even scholars like the enlightened Max Muller etc., among them were no exception to this class (See Preface to Max Muller's translation for the *Ṛgveda)*.

This approach towards nature they maintain, was the weakness of Indian thought. But ironically, the fact is that the same weakness was the very unassailable tower of strength of *Sanātana Dharma* and throws a flood of light on its most glorious humane outlook on life in its entirety, without a parallel among the host of world-religions.

The Indian seers and thinkers of yore, after hundreds of years of meditation, penance, introspection, harsh disciplined search for truth, arrived at the considered opinion that the entire universe—seen-unseen, interior-exterior, known-unknown, was nothing but the manifestation of the Power Supreme, its material

and efficient cause, Nārāyaṇa. The *Mantra Puṣpa* (flower of *Veda)* declares that Nārāyaṇa, reigns supreme enveloping the entire universe both as its microcosm and macrocosm.

यच्च किंचिज्जगत्सर्वं दृश्यते श्रूयतेऽपि वा।
अन्तर्बहिश्चतत्सर्वं व्याप्य नारायणः स्थितः॥

And it was He and He alone, that was experienced and called by different seers, according to their conceptions as Śiva, Hari, Viṣṇu, *Brahmā,* Indra, *Paramasvarāt, Śakti,* etc. This was because, the Truth or Power Supreme, the propelling agent of the universe, was like a multi-faceted diamond and the *Ṛṣis* in their mortal bodies with limited comprehension, could view only one of the facets of the incomprehensible diamond and faithfully named their respective experiences accordingly, which explains the variety of attributes, names, forms of God-head prevalent in the Indian theology. In the light of this we have to understand the implications of *Mahāvākyas* like 'सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म, अयमात्मा ब्रह्म, तत्त्वमसि, प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म, आनंदो ब्रह्म, ॐ तत्सत्' etc.

Now let us try to examine and understand the vexing age-long problem in its three fold aspect i.e., 'जीव, ईश्वर, जगत्' Soul, God and Universe. First let us dwell on *Īśvara* or God.

It is a known fact, that among the many opinions propounded by various *Ācāryas,* weaving out their theories around Gods like Śiva, Viṣṇu, Śakti etc. *Śaivism* was the most ancient one as revealed by the archaeological finds at Harappa, Mohanjodaro etc. It establishes that Śiva was considered as the overlord of this universe. Who is this Śiva, what does the word mean ? *Saṁskṛta* is a language based on roots 'धातु'. What is the root from which the word Śiva 'शिवः' has acquired its form ? The *Āgama Śāstra* explains this in a very interesting manner, It says—

हिसि धातोः सिंह शब्दो वश कांतौ शिवः स्मृतः।
वर्ण-व्यत्ययतः सिद्धौ पश्यकः कश्यपो यथा॥

(Saundaryalaharī Lakṣmīdharī. Śloka 1)

The words 'सिंह' and 'शिव' took their forms, from their roots 'हिसि' (to hurt) and 'वश' (light) and by the application of the phonetic law 'वर्ण व्यत्यय (interchange of letters) just as the word *Paśyaka* which became *Kaśyapa* 'कश्यप'.

The root 'वश' meaning light, becomes 'शव' by the interchange of letters and by adding (I) 'शक्ति बीज' (denoting energy) to the letter 'श' the word 'शिव' is formed meaning thereby light. The Indian thinkers conceived that light was God, which is quite convincing and meaningful. Every species in the creation—perhaps with the exception of owl—takes sustenance for life from light. Therefore that which gives life (light) is God !

Thus Śiva comes to mean, life-giving factor, God. The properties (धर्म) of light are many. It gives energy, it spreads automatically, it makes you enjoy life, and it attracts like a magnet. So the same light (God) Śiva, becomes 'शक्ति' (energy), Viṣṇu (that which spreads) 'व्याप्नोतीति विष्णुः', Rāma, enjoyment (रमणशीलता) and Kṛṣṇa (कर्षणात्) (attracting). Thus anyone of these words, connotes the name of God (light), the elixir of life, sustainer of the universe, the multifaceted power supreme. The devotee is at full liberty to choose the name and aspect of his taste for worship. This is the universal catholicity of the Indian theology, implied in the diverse forms and names of God, which forms the base for *Sanātana Dharma.* Can there be any parallel so convincing and yet scientific to this conception of God, anywhere in the galaxy of religions founded by mortals, in the world ? It was this wonderful aspect or unity in diversity, projected with conviction and emphasis by the legendary Hindu monk of India, the great Swāmī Vivekānanda, at the parliament of religions, Chicago, a century back, that compelled the west to bow down before the universality of the *Sanātana Dharma.* The Swāmījī quoted the following famous *Śloka* from the *Śiva Mahimnaḥ stotram* in support of his statement—

त्रयी सांख्यं योगः पशुपतिमतं वैष्णवमिति ।
प्रभिन्नेप्रस्थाने परमिदमदः पथ्यमिति च ।
रुचीनां वैचित्र्यादृजुकुटिल नाना पथजुषां ।
नृणामेकोगम्यस्त्वमसिपयसामर्णव इव ॥

It is a pleasant surprise, that we find most of other religions of our times echoeing the truth that light, fire (Śiva) was God.

The Persians are fire-worshippers even today. The *Ṛgveda* starts with obeisance to fire—'अग्निमीळे पुरोहितम्'. The Christians pray to the kindly light for guidance. Guru Nānaka Deva, who attracted both Hindus and Muslims to his fold, was eloquent in his utterance, when he declared 'अव्वल अल्ला नूर उपाया' that "Allāha created light in the beginning." Muslims go by the movements of moon—an aspect of light, in their rituals. The Japanese and a host of other countries look upon sun, the eternal power-house of light and energy as their God. It is said that the symbol (लिंग) of God *(Śiva Liṅga)* with a garland of Rudrākṣas, is to be seen even today, in a museum in the city Vatican. All these proofs point to the universality and antiquity of *Sanātana Dharma.*

Among the priceless antiques unearthed during the excavations at Harappa, Mohanjodaro, one terracotta seal was of remarkable significance and records the glorious heights of metaphysical knowledge attained by the common man in the streets of India some thousands of years ago long before advent of Christianity. It was a round seal made of clay— evidently for currency among the lowest illiterate rung of society—with a tree having two branches and two birds perching on them, with a difference. It was a *Pīpala* tree, and bird on one branch holds a fruit in its beak, whereas the other on the second branch, shines brilliantly without eating any fruit. This seal was found among the many other similar antiques like a trident (त्रिशूल), bull (वृषभ) three headed figure etc., all pointing to the prevalence of *Śaivism* during that period. This particular seal in question brings back to the memory of a *Vaidika* scholar, one of the most celebrated hymns from the *Ṛgveda* '*Dwā Suparṇā*' *Mantra*—

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्त्यनश्नन्नन्योऽभिचाकशीति ॥

This seal solves with ease, the much vexed riddle faced by truth-seekers in the field of Indian Philosophy (वेदांत) namely, What is soul (जीव) ? What is the world (जगत्) and what is God (ईश्वर) ? The *Pīpala* tree is called in *Saṁskṛta* as 'अश्वत्थ' (अ+श्व+त्थ), which means that which does not exist the next day. i.e., transitory. The world (जगत्)—mundane existence, symbolised by the *Pīpala* tree, is not

permanent but ever fleeting. One of the two birds with fruit in beak, represents the individual soul (जीव) which enjoys (eats) the fruit (luxuries) of the world and suffers, whereas the other bird, the self-effulgent God (ईश्वर), shines as an onlooker (साक्षी) without touching anything. We are all ordinary people plagued by attractions of the mundane world enjoying them only to suffer, while the self-effulgent God (ईश्वर) the other bird, merely supervises the whole show, without any attachment and yet shines. The purport of the Vedic couplet, enshrining the essence of the unfathomable ocean of *Vedānta,* was brought out like a gem of purest rays, serene, from the dark unknown depths, and made readily available even to the common dweller of India a hamlet long before the sun of knowledge dawned on most parts of the global horizon. This seal reveals to truth-seeker the secret of life, that attachment to the worldly pleasures is bondage and detachment from them is liberation. This is the saga of the *Sanātana Dharma.* A hazy shadow of this truth can be faintly noticed in the Biblical episode of Adam and Eve and the fruit of the forbidden tree.

A reference was made above, to the false criticism of western scholars, on the nature-worship prevalent in India. Needless to say, that such a charge was totally unwarranted, being the outcome of lack of understanding of Indian regard for nature. The *Vedānta* declares that the mundane universe full of diverse species of creation, time-bound multiple forms and names, was the very manifestation of God whose desire to become many resulted in its existence. *Śruti* says—'स ऐक्षत एकोऽहं बहुस्याम्' As such it is but natural for the ardent Hindu theist to perceive the spark of divinity in every atom and pay homage to it. Nothing is devoid of life and divinity in the world. Even a stone becomes an object of worship.

Explaining the rational and scientific aspects of the Power Supreme it was observed earlier that the names Śiva, Kṛṣṇa, *Śakti* Viṣṇu etc., project the various properties (धर्म) of God. This should not be understood that they were mere symbolic terms and such divine personalities never existed. The Power-Supreme responds to and fulfils the desires of a dedicated aspirant, assuming the

form of the latter's choice and taste. In the *Gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa declared in very clear terms. I will fulfil the prayers of my devotees assuming the forms and names of their choice—'ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम्'. Nothing is beyond the Power-Supreme, *Īśvara*. So the innumerable manifestations and *Avatāras* of the Lord were very much real and true. And they make their appearance frequently whenever discipline of *Dharma is* in danger and uphold the law. Saints, *Ācāryas,* Messiahs, Prophets, spiritual preceptors etc., were all such manifestations of the Lord who appear in human forms as per the demands of their times. Lord declared in *Gītā*—'धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे'.

The entire cosmos, consisting of, not only our world but also the entire galaxy of planets and stars, each of which was in no way smaller than our earth, was the creation of the Power Supreme. They are presided over and administered at his command by His agents generally called as 'महाभूत' five *Mahābhūtas,* elements. They can be designated as the cosmic administrators and the code of their conduct as cosmic administrative service (C. A. S.) as per our modern terminology. They discharge their duties, out of terror, very promptly, precisely and punctually dispensing justice to all equally without any sort of discrimination. *Śruti* says—

भीषास्माद्वातः पवते। भीषोदेति सूर्यः।
भीषास्मादग्निश्चेन्द्रश्च मृत्युर्धावतिपञ्चम इति ॥

"Out of fear (for the Supreme) the wind blows; out of fear, the sun rises; out of fear elements of the fire and Indra (water and administration) discharge their duties whereas death the fifth (for removing all undesirable things) runs."

The treatment meted out by these and other similar agents, to all the species under their jurisdiction was equal, non-discriminatory and eternal. This is the *Sanātana Dharma.* The Law Eternal !

The *Sanātana Dharma,* the unique product of the *Karma Bhūmi,* Bharata, advocates and lays stress on two points for its followers, who aspire to prosper in life here and after death. They are reverence (श्रद्धा) towards elders, scriptures and rituals and implicit faith (विश्वास) in God and his injunctions. Without these

two requisites, even established *Siddhas* cannot perceive divinity enshrined in their own hearts. Saint Tulasīdāsa rightly observes in his Rāmacaritamānasa—

भवानीशङ्करौ वन्दे श्रद्धाविश्वासरूपिणौ ।
याभ्यां विना न पश्यन्ति सिद्धाः स्वान्तःस्थमीश्वरम् ॥

"I bow down before mother *Bhavānī* and Lord *Śaṅkara* the very embodiments of *Śraddhā* and *Viśvāsa* respectively without whose grace (even) *Siddhas* cannot perceive the Lord dwelling in their hearts."

Sanātana Dharma, the immortal fruit of the Indian philosophical thought, truly secular, non-discriminatory, devoid of bigotry, universally adoptable, is like a cart running on the two wheels of *Śraddhā* and *Viśvāsa.* It will never let down anybody who seeks refuge with unwavering faith. It was there from times immemorial and shall continue for ever harbouring seekers from all over the world and offering them shelter and solace. Its tenets, scriptures, and other injunctions are meant only for those who invest their reverence and implicit faith in them. Atheists, infidels and those who dabble in vain arguments wasting their time and energy, are not at all eligible to touch them. Based on universal laws of nature and human values, the relevance of *Sanātana Dharma* for the sustenance, well being and promotion of the world community was never lost and it stands like a monolith rock defying all turbulent winds, undaunted for all times to come.

Vidyā means knowledge and *Avidyā* means action. It is necessary to perform the actions enjoined in the *Śāstras* along with learning lessons on *Brahmavidyā.* One can go beyond death by means of *Karma.* The intention is that by performing Śāstric action one can be free from the improper tendencies *(Pravṛtti)* with which we are born and which cause repeated births and deaths. It is only when the heart is thus made pure that *Brahmavidyā* can be properly attained enabling the knower to attain *Brahma.*

Philosophy, Ritual and Mythology, their Contribution to Sanātana Dharma

—*Dr. S. S. Awasthi*

Sanātana Dharma is a name of the statute (व्यवस्था) sublime. In the very outset of the creation it was bestowed upon the mankind for sustaining individuality, society, country and the world as well. After a long span of time in other countries it came to exist only as a part of it. Fortunately this *Sanātana Dharma* had been preserved in India in its full form, and still has its influence on the greater part of public of our country.

Philosophy, ethics, ritual and mythology are the constituents of *Sanātana Dharma.* In Bhāratavarṣa philosophy is not merely an intellectual exercise but a way of living which leads towards the ultimate truth, the God. It elucidates the human life, indicates the purpose of the formation of entire universe and discloses the form of the formless one. It teaches an art of living beyond the caste, creed, culture and country. Some philosophers affirm, that extreme knowledge is sure to come immediately through mere a teaching. They, in this matter, tell a story which runs thus—"Once, ten persons were going on a travel. On their way they got a river. They entered into the water and crossed it. When they came on the other side, they wanted to know if all the fellow travellers are safe. One by one they counted the others but there were only nine persons, because every numerator did not count himself. Thus they knew that one person is drowned. Now they began to weep and cry. Then a sage accidently came on that spot and enquired why they were crying. They told the story. The sage said to a person to number the others. The person counted and there were only nine. Then the sage putting his fore-finger over the chest of the numerator exclaimed—you are tenth (दशमस्त्वमसि). At the very moment they got knowledge and became happy.

But the other philosophers hold that without purification of mind none can attain the absolute reality. Ethics (आचार शास्त्र) and

ritual (यागादि विधान) are the main means of getting mind purified. The science of ethics commands all generally—tell always the truth, follow good conduct, do not be careless in the regular study of the *Vedas* or in the silent repetition of a *Mantra* etc. The gigantic mansion of *Sanātana Dharma* is built on the ground of *Ācāra Śāstra*. Common behaviour is compulsory for all while the particular differs. The rules of conduct of a king and his subjects are divided. The classes like *Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya* and *Śūdra* have particular and separate code of conduct.

Ceremonial acts and sacrificial rites i.e., rituals are established by the *Vedas*. That is called *Karma-Kāṇḍa*. As *Sanātana Dharma* and *Vaidika Dharma* are synonymous so ritual (कर्मकाण्ड) also seconds *Sanātana Dharma*. Really speaking, there is no *Sanātana Dharma* without sacrifical rites (Rituals). Lord Kṛṣṇa says—

यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम् ॥

(*Gītā* XVIII. 5)

"Sacrifice, charity and penance—all these are purifiers of wise men."

Mythology—*Purāṇa Vidyā* or ancient traditional history interprets the *Vedas* in its own way. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*. (*Prakriyāpāda* Ch. I) says—

इतिहासपुराणाभ्यां वेदं समुपवृंहयेत ।
विभेत्यल्पश्रुताद्वेदो मामयं प्रहरिष्यति ॥

With the help of *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* everyone should make the knowledge of *Vedas* strong because the *Veda* fears from a man of limited knowledge in this state he may cause injury to it. *Vedas* are the root cause of *Sanātana Dharma* according to Manu, the great law-giver. He says—'वेदोऽखिलो धर्ममूलम्'. Mythology or *Purāṇa Vidyā* deals with creation, annihilation, descendants of *Devas* and *Pitṛs*, description of *Manvantaras* (*Manvantara*—the fourteenth part of a day of *Brahmā*) and accounts of solar and lunar races as well.

There are eighteen *Purāṇas*, eighteen *Upa Purāṇas* and eighteen *Aupa Purāṇas*. This *Purāṇa Vidyā* is an encyclopaedic presentation of *Sanātana Dharma*.

Sanātana Dharma is Divinity

—*Swami Brahmananda*

त्वमक्षरं परमं वेदितव्यं त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम्।
त्वमव्ययः शाश्वतधर्मगोप्ता सनातनस्त्वं पुरुषो मतो मे ॥

(*Gītā* XI. 18)

Let us salute, first, in the beginning, to the *Sanātana* along with *Dharma* in the fore, in the rear, on all sides, above and below and within and without as well.

Sanātana is the *Dharma*. *Dharma* is the *Sanātana*. They are inseparable. They cannot be split as two words or ideas. It should be better *Sanātana Dharma*. For both *Sanātana* and *Dharma* are synonyms of the divinity, Godhood. As love is God and God is love, *Sanātana Dharma* is God and God is *Sanātana Dharma*.

In Northern India, the word *Dharma* is widely used to mean religion. But, in the Southern parts of Bhārata, it is understood in the sense other than religion.

In *Śrīmad Bhagvadgītā*, they say that the word 'आत्मा' is used to mean in eighteen senses like—body, mind, senses, *Jīva* (finite self) and *Paramātmā* (infinite self) etc., so also, *Dharma* has innumerable shades of meanings. It is something like an ocean. Once, Vivekānanda described *Dharma* as a word that has no equivalent in any language of our world. To denote innumerable ideas, word *Dharma* is used. None of the languages, in this universe, can coin a word, which can bring out the whole gamut of meanings that the word *Dharma* can express.

In worldly parlance, there are Social *Dharma* (संघ धर्म), Political Dharma (राज धर्म), *Dharma* of caste (कुल धर्म), *Dharma* of the *Āśrama* (आश्रम धर्म), *Dharma* of the battle-field (युद्ध धर्म), *Dharma* of the physical body (देह धर्म), and so on and so forth.

Dharma is divinity. In the divinity i.e., in the *Dharma* all the above mentioned *Dharmas* are included.

Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa had made it so clear that everything is in Him but he is not in everything (VII. 12). This is a very subtle idea and also must be understood by one and all in the most clear and right sense of the teaching. So also all the relative *Dharmas* are having their existence in the divine existence *Dharma*, which is no other than *Parabrahma*. But divine *Dharma* is not in the worldly *Dharmas*. Divinity is *Prime Dharma* (मुख्य धर्म) or Principal *Dharma* whereas all the rest are Secondary *Dharmas* (गौण धर्माः).

In the thirteenth chapter of the *Gītā*, while explaining—"What is *Jñeya* (ज्ञेय), it is explicitly said that Godhood is neither existence nor non-existence. In like manner, *Dharma*—the divinity is neither *Dharma* nor non-*Dharma*. It is above all the *Dharmas*. Not only that, it—the *Sanātana Dharma* is a way of life also. It is none of these *Dharmas* or religions in a gross sense—such as Hindu religion, Buddhistic religion, Christian religion, Mohammaden religion, Sikh religion etc. The infinite *Sanātana Dharma* is the propeller and the finite *Dharmas* are the propelled *Dharmas*.

Of course, all the worldly *Dharmas* also have to do their part as ordained by the divine *Sanātana Dharma*, in carrying on the process of running the world in the most correct and calculated way as per mathematical precision and in the most exact scientific way. *Sanātana Dharma* is the life and soul of all the rest of *Dharmas*. 'मे मतः सनातनः पुरुषः त्वं' I believe that you are the immemorial person. You are the first and the foremost, primordial, original *Tattva*—reality. You are the one without a second. 'बीजं मां सर्वभूतानां विद्धि पार्थ सनातनम्' (know Me, O Pārtha, to be the perennial or eternal seed of all beings). From these teachings and through these words, it can be inferred that 'सनातनः' and 'सनातनं' is divinity itself.

We heard from realized souls that *Dharma* and God are not two but one. 'धर्मो रक्षति रक्षितः' (If you dedicate yourself to *Dharma* which is no other than God, God will be with you and will be preserving and protecting you, eternally).

All relative *Dharmas* are an outcome of that one eternal *Dharma*—The *Sanātana*. It is beginningless and endless. For all these so-called *Dharmas* to which all humanity is adhering this Divine *Dharma*—Godhead is the originator, source and seed.

As object and its shadow, word and its meaning, matter and its force and being and its nature cannot be differentiated, so also *Sanātana* and its *Dharma* cannot be separated felt and experienced. *Sanātana Dharma* is a word-form of that abstract, one eternal existence—knowledge, bliss. *Sanātana* is God and *Dharma* is its way, principle, method, technique, mechanism, Physics and Chemistry, goad and guide of creation, preservation and dissolution. The whole process of the abstract formless existence taking form and name is creation, maintaining status or rather allowing it to remain for a specific period, to carry on the world-drama, is preservation. Stripping of forms and names and going back to be dissolved in divinity is dissolution. When all these religions peel off their relative names and forms, of outward formalities of their respective gross observances, the resultant one is *Sanātana Dharma* or the Eternal Godhead.

The Lord tried to make us understand His all-pervasive divine entity in this way: In me, all this is strung as a garland of beads on a string. Likewise, all these diverse *Dharmas* of the world are strung on the string of the *Sanātana*-one being-*Dharma*.

The Lord Supreme out of His unfathomable benevolence, though He is formless and nameless, simply an abstract *Saccidānanda* principle, through His song celestial, with the help of some simple similies, gave us the clue to grasp and understand the one which is beyond the ken of our finite understanding as—I, the father of the created universe, the mother, the supporter, the grandfather, the one to be realized, the purifier, the *Praṇava* and all the divine wisdom. That is to say, the *Sanātana Dharma* is no other than that father, mother, eternal spirit which is there, only to take us back to Him, to co-travel with us all, through the ruffled waters of *Saṁsāra* from the clutches of birth and death to our original eternal state of bliss and all peace.

As the divinity is to take form and name as a human being to establish *Āśrama*, so also *Sanātana Dharma* is to be revived and elivated to its original glory by one and all in the east and the west to make our dwelling world an abode of understanding, harmony, love and peace.

As divinity or Godhood belongs to all alike, so also *Sanātana Dharma* is a common property of all seekers after truth all over the world of all climes and times. *Sanātana Dharma* owns none but pines and longs for the peace of all the sentient and insentient. It makes no difference between religion and religion, nation and nation and between caste and creed. For, *Sanātana Dharma* is *Paramātmā* alone, it is called 'समम्'. It resides equally in everyone and everything and treats all as equals. It graces all without any favour or prejudice, impartially and deeply loves us from the core of His love-entity.

Sanātana Dharma concerns itself only with the Godhead that is in everything. It is always ready to extend its helping hand to lift all of us, out from the depths of ignorance, who cry and pray for His help and protection, leaving everything to His divine will and play, surrendering to Him completely in toto, not even relying on one's manly efforts in the least.

Sanātana Dharma is even the *Sama* (सम) without the least modification, either in the dark age, stone age, primitive age, cultured age and civilized age—if at all, they are there as man makes himself believe.

Vivekānanda proclaimed boldly from the pulpit of the world religions that the *Sanātana Dharma* is eternal and none can demolish the same. If there is anybody that feels and believes he can, we have to simply pity him for he knows not what he means by his blind brutish belief.

Sanātana Dharma is all-in-one. The sun is only one; but there are seven main colours besides the intermediate multitudinous mixed colours. Even though the *Sanātana Dharma* is one without a second, to make the aspirants understand, to give rational answers for irrational questions also, to shepherd those sheep that lost their way and wandering and groping in wilderness, to attain to their goal of the blessed human life. It has to preach and teach in a thousand and one way. The *Vedas* also are saying so. 'एकं सत् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति' (truth is one, men call it by various names). Those that are not serious and sincere to know this biblical or Vedic truth, those that are of misguided brains, only quarrel that

there are differences between religions and make ignorant people do war and fight between themselves and won't keep quiet until they destroy each other.

Sanātana Dharma proclaimed this differentiation as delusion. The man of the world feels that to disillusion this delusion, is hard to manipulate by himself. Yet, here *Sanātana Dharma* comes to the rescue of even the so-called sinners of the sinners and proclaims that they can have redemption if they seek Me alone—'मामेव' *Sanātana Dharma*. Here 'Me' is stressed by the word 'alone'. It is to underline that one should take shelter in the One who is devoid of forms and names, who is the one in all, the one same, and who is the goal and soul of all religions.

One may ask; when there are two separate words—*Sanātana* and *Dharma*, there must be two things. Then, how can we conclude that the two are one. Scriptures and self-experience say that the ultimate reality or being is only one. It can never be two. When we speak about the ultimate absolute existence, we say it is *Sat-Cit-Ānanda*. Even though, there are three different words in the expression, we accept the thing denoted by the compound word is as one without a second *Parabrahma* alone.

In the above quoted *Śloka (Bhagavadgītā* XI. 18), Arjuna after seeing the *Viśvarūpa*, declares that the colossal form which is face to face with him, in his opinion and faith, is *Śāśvataḥ* (eternal) and *Sanātanaḥ* (the original one) without a second *Tattva*. All that is going on in His universal person (विश्वरूप), is its *Dharma*. The *Dharma* or nature of water is to be cool and to be flowing. If you can remove its coolness and fluidity, then it can never be water. Water and its *Dharma* can never be separated. The eternal (शाश्वत), original being (सनातन), can never be separated from *Dharmagoptā* (the protecting *Tattva*—principle of *Dharma)*.

'रसो वै सः' He is the quintessence of the essences. *Paramātmā* when assumed forms and names, became 'प्रपञ्च' the universal form-name-world of five elements. Form-name part is non-essential where as the *Sat* principle is the immanent essential part which is 'रस' (quintessence). *Sanātana Dharma* is the 'रस' (quintessence) of all the essences—*Dharmas* of various forms and

names of the created or modified *Paramātmā*. Without 'रस' nothing can be there to be counted as something. Without *Sanātana Dharma* as 'रस' quintessence, no *Dharma* can be recognised as *Dharma* such as social *Dharma*, political *Dharma*, religious *Dharma* etc. *Sanātana Dharma* lends its *Dharma* to all other *Dharmas* to perform their given portions of duties in this world-drama. World-drama is only a play of forms and names, where the truth of the reality of the universe is known in its entirety.

When explaining the four values of human life *Dharma, Artha, Kāma* and *Mokṣa*, they say that *Dharma* must go hand in hand with *Artha* and *Kāma* to attain the fourth final value, *Mokṣa*. Without *Dharma* nothing can be achieved. As we cannot stay without the ground beneath, so also nothing can be obtainable bereft of *Dharma*—the immortal principle.

Sanātana Dharma is the *Dharma* of the originator. The originator or the creator must be there already prior to any created world or being. One cannot fix any beginning to the creator. So all have accepted unquestioningly as, the creator is beginningless. When creator is beginningless, in like-manner his *Dharma* must be also without any beginning. Since it is *Dharma* devoid of beginning, the term *Sanātana Dharma*—Eternal *Dharma*—beginningless *Dharma* has been coined as a notation to convey the idea of the beginningless.

One can become many. So *Sanātana Dharma* alone has taken shape of various *Dharmas* to meet the needs of the human inquisitive mind. When all these *Dharmas* merge in their source, it is *Sanātana Dharma*.

In *Sanātana Dharma* 'चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः' (*Gītā* IV.13) is a fine, wonderful unique arrangement and discipline for human society to follow. The beginningless, endless and ageless *Sanātanā*—the one *Sanātana Dharma* has created the world—manyness, it is its bounden duty to wield its sway in the most orderly, well-disciplined and scientifically principled way. That is possible only when it uses 'गुणकर्मविभागशः'. innate disposition and vocation as its touch stone, determining principle or guidance. No one should read 'चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं' and 'गुणकर्मविभागशः' as

separate units in the statement. We should read it as one whole compact code rule. God made the one human society unit as fourfold by the differentiation of *Guṇa* and *Karma.* God has a very clear idea of it. He made the statement so compact and correct in such a way that no misconstruing, is possible. But, yet the petty-minded, bigotted and blind man brought in so many things to present it in a light other than what it is. If *Sanātana Dharma* is followed in its right meaning, worked out duly in the way it is designed to be lived, world would be better than now. Merely sitting and simply discussing philosophical intricacies and waging wordy wars and feeling contended that truth can be established or realized in that way, will serve no purpose.

Lord Rāmacandra is an embodiment of pure *Dharma* or *Sanātana Dharma* 'रामो विग्रहवान् धर्मः'. Rāma sanctified and transformed a stone into Ahalyā, performed obseques to a bird Jaṭāyu, gave protection to a monkey, Sugrīva, blessed a demon Vibhīṣaṇa and embraced the menial Guha with all love, all these show that he is particular and is pleased only with *Guṇa* and *Karma* of the person. Since Rāma is *Dharma* itself, He cannot act otherwise. He never trespassed *Dharma,* for, he knows full well, if he does anything against *Dharma*—righteousness, he will be spoiling many with his bad example. We cannot expect any untoward act from his life which is *Dharma* itself. He is *Sanātana Dharma.* He is a staunch follower and observer of *Sanātana Dharma.* He dedicated his life completely and absolutely to *Sanātana Dharma.* By the by, he upheld the same. He even strained his royal life for flying the flag of *Dharma,* high in the heavens.

Stained and polluted *Sanātana Dharma* has become a target for all criticism, now a days, more than ever. *Sanātana Dharma* must be upheld. By doing so, other *Dharmas* also will shine brighter. If we want that our religion must remain eternally, then we must allow the light of wisdom of *Sanātana Dharma* ever aflame or remaining burning in our heart of hearts. May all glory be to the great *Sanātana Dharma !*

Undoubtedly, since Rāma is *Sanātana Dharma* and *Sanātana Dharma* is the welwisher of humanity in its totality, if the whole

humanity comes forward to install Rāma in Ayodhya, how fine it would be. For God's sake, none should misunderstand. Installing Rāma means, simply installing *Dharma,* which *Dharma* everybody welcomes heart and soul, irrespective of caste, creed and religion. In installing so, we will be installing only our true and eternal welfare. Installation in Ayodhya will mean only the gross form of establishing *Dharma* and Rāma the abstract *Dharma* in our heart temples. We hope and pray that everybody will consider this humble idea with an unbiased, cool and calm heart. 'तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय' (lead us to light from darkness).

Ṛṣi is seer. Those *Ṛṣis,* who have seen the ultimate truth, have recorded their experiences in a figurative language and also explained it personifyingly too, in a definite way. In Hindu mythology there is the personification of *Ardhanārīśvara*—Pārvatī-Parameśvara combination. It is a unique idea. One can be benefitted immensely by contemplating on the inner truth—*Sanātana Dharma* in it. *Gītā* thirteenth chapter says—

यावत्संजायते किंचित्सत्त्वं स्थावरजङ्गमम् ।
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसंयोगात्तद्विद्धि भरतर्षभ ॥

(26)

"Whatever is there in this visible universe, it is all a combination of *Kṣetra* and *Kṣetrajña.*"

Pārvatī and Parameśvara are a combination of forms names and the soul. *Kṣetra-Kṣetrajña* is a mere combination of *Tattvas* or principles. Both descriptions are perfectly true in their own contexts. O Man ! You are, in reality, *Kṣetrajña* alone. Your body is the *Kṣetra,* through which medium, you are expressing your *Dharma*—way of life. *Ardhanārīśvara* is *Kṣetra-Kṣetrajña* combination. You, the *Kṣetrajña,* are the *Sanātana.* Your body's physical expressions and living are the *Dharma* of the *Kṣetrajña.* As the *Kṣetrajña* if and when you express your *Kṣetrajña Dharma,* you are God himself—'तत्त्वमसि'. If and when you express mistakenly with the consciousness that you are this physical mundane non-eternal body, which is having a beginning and an end, it means you are acting as if you are non-God. The Divine-

Game in the life, is that we should act in this worldly plane with God-consciousness alone. *Sanātana Dharma's* purpose here is to rouse the human souls to right living of God-consciousness. Swāmī Rāma has rightly said that life and religion are not two but one.

Sanātana Dharma is one and the same and is equally present in all eternally. It teaches us all to see the divinity alone, which is residing in the sentient and insentient as well and work for the welfare of all and to sacrifice our individuality to make it merge in the divinity—the 'सनातनः शाश्वतः' and 'धर्मगोप्ता'.

Now-a-days, almost all the people in the east and the west feel and pride themselves as the most modern, cultured, civilized and highly advanced and enlightened. Almost all the governments in all continents before sanctioning even a petty need to a puny citizen, require to be fulfilled a world of paraphernalia of bureaucratic tapism from the central Prime Minister to the lowest authority in the village. One can imagine the tremendous waste of time, money, supervisions, checks and safeguards, conveying ware and tare and so on and so forth. It is something like catching a rat after digging the Himalaya. It is the best government which rules less. The scriptures of *Sanātana Dharma* showed to the world the sure ways and means for *Prajā-Rāja (democracy) Samṛddhi-Rāja* (plentitude)—*Sukha-Rāja* (rule of happiness), *Śānti-Rāja* (rule of peace) and *Dharma-Rāja* (righteous rule) etc.

Now, the governments in the world are obliged to declaring that ninety-five percent of the revenues collected from the citizens are to be expended on the employees that are there in the government job's and to meet their various demands and running the show. In spite of all these circumambulative circus feats, the governments are able neither to satisfy the employees nor give Dharmic rule to the citizens of the nations. *Sanātana Dharma* solved this in one stroke with advocating performances of *Yajña Dharma—Niṣkāma Karma*—selfless service wishing and working for the welfare of the whole world. This sort of service is to come out purely willfully, voluntarily, spontaneously, with the *Gurukula* education that every child in the world got in it's student life.

Service before self is a comprehensive solution for all the problems that come up in the affairs of social, political etc. Whatever thought, word or deed done for maintaining the peace and happiness of the creatures in the world, is *Yajña*.

God's creating, preserving and dissolving is the never-ending universal *Yajña*. The one divinity is allowing its all-in all to be distributed and shared with one and all alike. The same process of even distribution is also present in ritual *Yajñas*. 'इदं न मम' (it is not mine). This is yours. This is merely offering yours to you. In ritual—*Yajñas*, the royal exchequer, where the collected revenues are accumulated and lie idle are distributed to all the worthy in the kingdom. *Sanātana Dharma* alone can rescue the present day troubled world. It is the only way. नान्यः पन्था विद्यते'—there is no other go. If the whole world takes to *Sanātana Dharma* way of life, everything can become normal. Everybody can be free and peaceful. *Sanātana Dharma* way of life is capable of ruddering the boat of humanity to the safe shores. But the ignorant man is overdoing or misdoing or misusing the process of the *Yajña*. The overdoing of things is a sign of ignorance. It should not be allowed to take ugly shapes. Buddha's objection to such misused *Yajña* methods is of that sort.

The world is a common property of all not only of sentient beings, but also of insentient. What mother nature offers to all the world, should be evenly distributed among humanity. That is why the *Upaniṣad* of the *Sanātana Dharma* asks everybody not to covet others' properties and at the same time also not to lose one's share to others. This is the God-ordained socialism or communism where everything will be distributed amongst the concerned in right proportion and time without any outside interference. The government, where there is less interference, command and control is the best way of government. It is *Rāma-Rājya*, Rāma is *Sanātana* and *Rājya* is its Dharmic way of ruling the universe. Gāndhījī never pinned his identity with Bharata alone. He lived and worked for the eternal welfare of all. His *Rāmarājya* is not only for freedom—good government in this world but also for peace and full blossoming of the universal

Sanātana Soul (स्वाराज्य).

A votary of *Sanātana Dharma* is he, who worships, prays and serves the *Sanātana*—the Godhead selflessly and also fully conscious of its immanence and thoroughly realizing the intention of the *Sanātana,* while creating preserving and dissolving.

It is really balanced and well-balanced eternal scientific spiritual code. It is the basis for the created world, support for its preservation and the logic for its dissolution. Since it is with the *Sanātana* inseparable while it is emanating, *Sanātana Gītā Dharma Śāstra* also emanated along with it.

If all those, all over the world, that aspire for the peace of the universe should dedicate and work sacrificing their petty selfish ends and pave the way with their *Sanātana Dharma* way of life, 'लोक कल्याण' and 'सर्वजन श्रेयः' peace, plenty and progress will be near at hand. No sort of proselytisation is needed. All can remain in their own religions according to their taste and faith. But, one thing that is essential is the understanding that all religions lead to that one without a second, the *Sanātana* reality—divinity.

We plead all, all over the universe that they should not jump suddenly to mean *Yajña* as a mere sacrificial fire rite. Lord Kṛṣṇa the sole soul of all the seers in the east and west has given a clue to understand what *Yajña* is in its exact perspective. *Yajña* is the process to proceed and to march on and on, throwing light on our great march to culminate in our merging with the source.

We pray and beseech each and every liberally understanding soul all over the world to contribute their part and mite in propagating *Sanātana Dharma* and making the world citizens understand this truth and to inspire them to lead such divine *Sanātana Dhārmika* lives from now onwards.

May peace be unto all—*Om Śāntiḥ Śāntiḥ Śāntiḥ.*

Sanctity of Marriage Ceremony in Sanātana Dharma

The word *Vivāha* has been formed from the root 'वह' *(Vaha)* prefixed by 'वि' *(Vi)*. It is also called 'उद्वाह' there prefix being 'उत्'. The root 'वह' means to carry forward and the prefix 'वि' is used in the sense of especial where as 'उत्' means 'high above'. This way 'विवाह' or 'उद्वाह' is a process of carrying forward the social, domestic, religious and spiritual obligations which is impossible for a man till he is single. Or else it is an institution through which a couple transcends the lower layers of self-interest and advances on the path of self-sublimation. It is slightly different from 'marriage' as in 'marriage' it is the sense of conjugal union that plays supreme part whereas in 'विवाह' the fulfilment of obligatory requirements and transcendental journey is most important. Marriage functions just as an agent or is a license to satisfy the lust. This is why marriages are often followed by or culminate into divorce where as 'विवाह' unites the couple for innumerable births to come. The tie is rather eternal. The marriage is confined to the worldly pleasures whereas the other-world is the main object of 'विवाह'. Marriage is a ceremony but 'विवाह' is 'संस्कार'.

Conjugal appetite is an instinctive urge which is equally present among animals also. It is found in botanical plants also though not at a conscious level. Therefore in every country and every social sect, the institution of marriage is found irrespective of their intellectual or developmental standard. Some sort of sacramental or ceremonial functions are performed and certain rules and rites observed. Some recitals from sacred books and certain promises from both sides. Among other sects excepting Hindus, some



Vivāha Saṁskāra in Sanātana Dharma

terms and conditions are also settled. Hindu marriages are not a contract, social or legal that can be broken at the sweet will of the partners. The conception of *Ardhanārīśvara* is the ideal of Hindu marriage. The couple no longer remains a couple. It simply melts and is moulded in to one.

एतावानेव पुरुषो यज्जायात्मा प्रजेति ह।
विप्रा प्राहुस्तथा चैतद्यो भर्ता सा स्मृताङ्गना ॥

(*Manusmṛti* IX. 45)

Differences vanish and a stage of non-dualism attained. Hindu marriages are founded on a very strong and firm rock of non-dualist principles. Therefore, no need of any terms or conditions to be prescribed. Not even a legal witness is necessary. Only fire-god is enough. In the ensuing paragraphs some religious formalities regarding Hindu marriage will be discussed.

Hindu philosophy under *Sanātana Dharma* is of the opinion that a person can build his own future destiny. The rituals go one step further. It is supposed that through rituals, the personality and individuality of a person can be refined and modified to a considerable extent. There come the *Saṁskāras* or sacraments. *Sanātana Dharma* prescribes sixteen *Saṁskāras* right from conception till after death—the funeral rites. Out of these sixteen a few are more important and so they are prevalent almost in every civilized community but 'विवाह' is of prime importance as it is the foundation-stone of social life. *Manusmṛti* extols the married life and says—

यथा वायुं समाश्रित्य वर्तन्ते सर्वजन्तवः।
तथा गृहस्थमाश्रित्य वर्तन्ते सर्व आश्रमाः ॥

(*Manusmṛti* III. 77)

He thinks that householders are as indispensable for other orders of society as oxygen to every creature for keeping him alive.

Therefore the Hindu socialogists and *Ācāryas* have emphasized extremely to take every precaution and care before selecting a bride or a groom. Social, economic, physical, hygenic, medical,

educational, cultural, spiritual and the family history, no point should be left unexplored and unconsidered. Manu very emphatically says—

हीनक्रियं निष्पुरुषं निश्छन्दो रोमशार्शसम्।
क्षय्यामयाव्यपस्मारिश्वित्रिकुष्ठिकुलानि च॥

(*Manusmṛti* III. 7)

Here ten types of families have been listed which are to be discorded while negotiating for matrimonial settlement. They are—

(1) Who have abandoned their religious duties prescribed by the scriptures. (2) The families in which male issues are not born. (3) Which do not study *Vedas* (4) In which male and female both have long hairs, thick in density. (5) Suffering from piles. (6) Tuberculosis (7) Indigestion (8) Epilepsy (9) Leucoderma and (10) Leprosy.

He is equally emphatic in avoiding a girl as a wife, having the following demerits.

नोद्वहेत्कपिलां कन्यां नाधिकाङ्गीं न रोगिणीम्।
नालोमिकां नातिलोमां न वाचाटां न पिङ्गलाम्॥
नर्क्षवृक्षनदीनाम्नीं नान्त्यपर्वतनामिकाम्।
न पक्ष्यहिप्रेष्यनाम्नीं न च भीषणनामिकाम्॥

(*Manusmṛti* III. 8-9)

A bride having following characteristics should not be accepted. Having gray hairs, having extra limbs, sickly, who has no hairs on her body at all, who has too much hairs on the body, very talkative, having tawny eyes, having her name after a star, tree, river, mountain, bird, snake, *Mleccha* or maid servant."

He recommends to marry a girl with following qualities—

अव्यङ्गाङ्गीं सौम्यनाम्नीं हंसवारणगामिनीम्।
तनुलोमकेशदशनां मृद्वङ्गीमुद्वहेत्स्त्रियम्॥

(*Manusmṛti* III. 10)

"Well built body, beautiful name, walking style of a goose or elephant, hairs on the body, hairs on the head and the teeth all thin and lovely, the touch of the body soft."

Some of the points are of course, a bit inconvenient to appreciate but it clearly shows that Hindu socialogists gave due importance to the matrimonial relation which is rather beyond our reach to think of. I think, the readers will agree with me that by taking these precautions and cares we can put a full stop to the increasing number of divorce cases.

After the selection of bride and the groom enters the astrology in the matrimonial arena. First of all horoscopic charts of the two are compared and tallied. The longevity of the proposed couple, the finencial prospects, the probability of having or not having issues and the conjugal relation etc., are thoroughly discussed. After that an auspicious time for marriage is decided. It is a tedious job to search a faultless *Muhūrta* for a marriage. Apart from the five limbs of astrological calender auspiciousness of constellations and planetary situations are thoroughly looked into. The position of sun, moon, jupiter and venus is particularly considered in deciding a suitable time for marriage. Then follows a chain of minor sacraments like *Vara Varaṇa* (formal selection with ceremony) and *Tilaka* or *Ṭīkā* etc., and then on the decided date and time the formal and final 'विवाह संस्कार' takes place.

Why are all these precautions and cares necessary ? Because we want to ensure a happy life. This again shows that through these *Saṁskāras* we can modify our mental disposition as well as our destiny also to a certain extent. Then comes the main sacrament.

The marriage sacrament rites consist of—

(1) *Kanyā-Dāna* (giving the bride to the bridegroom by her parents). (2) *Vivāha Havana* (pouring oblations into the sacred fire). (3) *Pāṇigrahaṇa* (clasping hands). (4) *Hṛdayasparśa* (touching of the heart). (5) *Saptapadī* (circumambulation around sacred fire—seven times). (6) *Aśmārohaṇa* (mounting the stone, symbolic of stability and firmness). (7) *Sūryāvalokana* (acknowledging the sun as a witness of the sacrament and ceremony). (8) *Dhruva-Darśana* (looking at polar star, symbolic of constancy).

These are eight main functions of Hindu marriage. Out of them, four, seven and eight are of more or less a local character but the five are almost universal and are observed in all Hindu families. There, where marriages take place during day time, *Dhruva Darśana* is not possible; similarly during night *Sūryāvalokana* is impossible. *Hṛdaya Sparśa* has something apparently odd in it. So alongwith the lapse of time these three *Saṁskāras* were gradually dropped. Apart from that there are certain *Lokācāras* and *Kulācāras* of equal import which are observed as in certain areas bride and the groom put small morsel of some eatables in each other's mouth and a match of gambling takes place. Tulasī especially mentions these two functions in his *Mānasa* and *Kavitāvalī*—

कोहबरहिं आने कुअँर कुअँरि सुआसिनिन्ह सुख पाइ कै।
अति प्रीति लौकिक रीति लागीं करन मंगल गाइ कै।।
लहकौरि गौरि सिखाव रामहि सीय सन सारद कहैं।
रनिवासु हास बिलास रस बस जन्म को फलु सब लहैं।।

(*Mānasa* I. 326. *Chanda* 2)

Here in these lines Gaurī is instructing Rāma and Śāradā is advising Sītā to put morsel in each other's mouth. 'लहकौरि—लघु+कौरी' that is small+morsel=लहकौरि. Rāma, when left Ayodhya alongwith Viśvāmitra, did not expect to get accidently married and since that very time he had no feminine liaison so it was but necessary for some lady to play motherly role to instruct him what he should do and when. So Gaurī, the divine mother discharged that duty.

In *Kavitāvalī* Tulasī says—

दूलह श्रीरघुनाथु बने दुलही सिय सुंदर मंदिर माहीं।
गावति गीत सबै मिलि सुंदरि बेद जुवा जुरि बिप्र पढ़ाहीं।।
रामको रूपु निहारति जानकी कंकनके नगकी परछाहीं।
यातें सबै सुधि भूलि गई कर टेकि रही पल टारत नहीं।।

"A very lovely picture indeed. The beautiful and well decorated palace of king Janaka..........The *Kohabara*-room (room where the family gods, are invoked and stationed permanently and on special occasions sixteen *Mātrikās*, the nine

planetory deities and the manes are invoked), four wedded pairs, four *Vedīs*, four groups of chosen royal ladies and lovely girls surrounding the couples, ladies singing auspicious songs; Brahmins reciting *Vedas*, there is the play of gambling arranged at four places between four brides and four grooms. The poor Sītā lost every game because she was in a trance looking at the reflection of Rāma in the jewels of her bracelet."

When the parents have approved the marriage the question of finding a faultless and auspicious time (शुभ निर्दोष मुहूर्त्त) arises. Finding a good 'मूहूर्त' is given a super-normal importance. No astrological angle is left untouched. In no other social ceremony so much care is taken. That itself is proof of how Hindus attach importance to marriage, because marriage is not a mere social contract that can be dissolved . No, it is indissoluble and eternal, not confined to the present life only. There are ten major astrological faults which are avoided as for as possible.

Then certain steps of socio-religious import are taken. The first of them is betrothal which the Hindus call as 'वर रक्षा'. They do it ceremoniously. The people from bride's side, go to the residence of the bridegroom. Put on his hand some auspicious things like money, fruits and sacred threads. Some *Veda Mantras* are recited and the groom is betrothed. After sometime a comparatively more important function *Ṭīkā* or *Tilaka* takes place. Thereafter comes the marriage ceremony which is the most important *Saṁskāra* among all the sixteen *Saṁskāras*.

For celebrating the marriage, either party can go to the other's place but according to the general practice the bridegroom alongwith a procession comes to the bride's house. There first of all both the sides perform *Pūjā* and worship Varuṇa, Gaurī, Gaṇeśa, *Navagrahas* and pray that the important function may be completed without any obstruction. It is known as 'द्वारपूजा' (the worship at the main gate of the house). In this *Pūjā* the father of the bride worships the groom supposing that the groom is manifestation of Viṣṇu.

The bridegroom is required to dress the bride. So he brings

alongwith him necessary clothes and ornaments. Worship is offered even to these clothes and ornaments and they are made pure with purificatory *Mantras*. While offering these things to the bride, the groom recites the following *Veda Mantra*—

जरां गच्छ परिधत्स्व वासो भवाऽऽकृष्टीनामभिशस्तिपावा। शतं च जीव शरदः सुवर्चा रयिं च पुत्राननु संव्ययस्वाऽऽयुष्मतीदं परिधत्स्व वासः।

(*Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra* I. 4. 12)

"Live long till the old age, with me. Put on the garments given by me. You may prove to be a remover of all evils. Live long for hundred years. Give splendid sons and have plenty of wealth. O *Āyuṣmatī*, please have these garments."

What an ideal request and in what a respectful manner ? Before we go into the implications of this *Mantra*, let us see another *Mantra* wherein the bridegroom prays to the deities and wishes that they be graceful on the couple.

समञ्जन्तु विश्वेदेवाः समापो हृदयानि नौ।
सं मातरिश्वा सं धाता समु देष्ट्री दधातु नौ॥

(*Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra* I. 4.14)

"Let the Viśvedevas make our hearts adjustable to and accommodating each other. Let the holy waters (including Varuṇa the presiding deity) refine us by generating noble ideas and traits. Let the favourable *Mātariśvā* (the wind god), favourable Prajāpati and the goddess of preaching have our hearts together always."

The Hindu sages had a very far-reaching vision. The future of the society was always in their mind and hence they took due care and paid considerable attention to the future generations. This is why they imposed some restrictions as to which type of boys and girls be allowed to marry. They also categorised marriages and gave enough importance to what type of marriage may provide with the worthy progeny. There are eight types of marriages mentioned by Manu—

ब्राह्मो दैवस्तथैवार्षः प्राजापत्यस्तथासुरः।
गान्धर्वो राक्षसश्चैव पैशाचश्चाष्टमोऽधमः॥

(*Manusmṛti* III. 21)

(1) *Brāhma*—Inviting the bridegroom, ornamenting him and giving him one's daughter after observing the necessary rules.

(2) *Daiva*—Giving daughter to a *Ṛtvik* who performs his religious duties.

(3) *Ārṣa*—The bridegroom after giving a couple of cows to his father-in-law accepts the girl.

(4) *Prājāpatya*—When bride and bridegroom are permitted by their elders to live together and perform their domestic duties as a couple.

(5) *Āsura*—In this type of marriage the father of the girl charges a considerable fee and then gives his daughter.

(6) *Gāndharva*—In *Gāndharva* marriage the boy and girl according to their sweet will do the sexual intercourse. No permission of the parents is acquired.

(7) *Rākṣasa*—It is an arbitrary marriage. In this the man takes the girl by force against her wishes.

(8) *Paiśāca*—Sexual intercourse with a lady sleeping, mad or intoxicated. It is the worst among all the eight types of marriage.

Further he says that one can expect virtuous generation from the first four types and the rest four will produce only irreligious issues (*Manusmṛti* III. 41). That is why he very emphatically advocates only *Savarṇa Vivāha*. He says—

पाणिग्रहणसंस्कारः सवर्णासूपदिश्यते ।

(*Manusmṛti* III. 43)

Otherwise it will only be a process of cross-breeding.

This type of article does not allow much scope for giving elaborate details. So it will be concluded with the remarks that a Hindu breaths religion and lives religion. So every step of Hindu life is religious and marriage being the most important thing in *Varṇāśrama* system, is a matter of religious and spiritual importance. An ideal pair supporting each other can easily attain the ultimate good of life.

An Apology

The world today presents a very sad spectacle. The students in the schools and colleges have no respect for their teachers, go on strikes and resort to violent methods for meeting their demands. The industrialists exploit the labouring class by so many ways declaring a lock out or through retrenchment etc. The labour class adopts go-slow tactics and strikes. They have habituated themselves to indiscipline and they also resort to violence and ransack the factory to get their demands fulfilled. The leaders of the country want to cling to power by hook or crook. They amass riches by resorting to unfair means. The business community is adopting dishonest and unfair means in their trading activities. They sell substandard spurious and adulterated goods to the consumers. They care a fig whether they would cause diseases or deaths of those consumers. Communal riots take heavy tolls of lives. Terrorists are killing innocent people. Corruption has affected the very core of life. All these conditions prevail because the basic principles guiding humanity are being practically lost sight of.

To hoard wealth has become the only mission of life in general. A man having a hundred, wants to have a thousand and the one having thousand, wants lacs. One having lacs, wants crores of rupees. We only bother for riches and worldly comforts and care for their acquisition. They have created such a passion for themselves that now it has become the only *summum bonum* of our life.

This is an age when so-called educated youths raise the slogans '*Dharma* not wanted, let us do without it'. These educated friends are under the impression that the wretched condition of the Indian people is due to devotion to the so-called *Dharma*. It has become a habit or fashion for several people specially some political leaders

to say that Dharma should be kept apart from politics

The fallacy underlying these statements is the notion that *Dharma* is something like a garb or covering or a caste mark on the forehead or a degree which can be done away with, when not desired. Besides to many loose thinkers, religion means a few sayings contained in scriptures and totally disconnected from life.

There are no water-tight compartments of life such as religious life on Sunday, political life on Monday and business life of fraud and dishonesty and exploitation on Tuesday. *Dharma* must permeate life in all its spheres and activities. *Dharma* is therefore to be its essence on all the days of the year and each moment of the day. It is not a baggage to be shelved when one finds inconvenient to take it along with him or a captain lays aside his navigation chart. An architect cannot remove supporting columns without disaster. A ruler cannot do without laws. An engine cannot work without the motive that urges it on. *Dharma* is a chart, a pillar, the law and the motive power in this life which must have a goal. If we are to steer away from rocks, we must be kept informed of every movement. Religion or *Dharma* is to be lived. It is the life itself.

What we understand in short is that *Dharma* makes a full man, leads a man towards his full growth or perfection and without *Dharma* man is but a beast.

Even if we picture to our mind a nation having plentiful resources, an extensive and flourishing trade and a rich variety of industries and requiring no help from out side, but suppose individuals comprising that nation, are bent upon usurping each other's property, find glory in deceiving one another, quarrel among themselves and do not hesitate on a favourable opportunity to kill each other, will anyone call that nation advanced in spite of all its wealth and greatness ? Let alone progress, can that nation survive for any length of time or enjoy the slightest degree of peace or happiness unless eternal principles of *Dharma* are inculcated among the individuals ? No, that nation is bound to ruin. He, who regards himself a part not only of the nation or country but of the whole universe, he who

observes that the one supreme spirit, the eternal principle of *Sanātana Dharma*, is permeating the whole universe—or who has identified his self with all beings of universe 'सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा' (*Gītā* V. 7) will be prepared to sacrifice his all for the good of the universe. It is this spirit which actuated Dadhīci to offer even his bones for the protection of the universe. To a man possessing nobility of character, the whole universe constitutes one family 'वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्'. The thoughtful reader will now realize that the meaning and implication of the eternal principles of *Sanātana Dharma* grow wider and wider for enlightend men.

Under the present circumstances it is felt that deep rooted ills need a drastic remedy. The only remedy appears to create a greater sense of *Dharma* in us, to make all realize that there is a divine purpose which animates this universe. Without *Dharma* there can neither be peace nor growth nor stability whether in the life of an individual or a nation or in the total life of humanity. We have been vouchsafed this valuable human life to serve others by sticking to our own duty for duty's sake not for any gain or reward. This life is not for enjoying sensual pleasures, it is for attaining supreme bliss—the ultimate goal of human life.

Therefore, the present condition of our country rather of the whole world, prompted us to propagate atleast among some of the educated people through the readers of *Kalyana-Kalpataru* the guiding principles of life which are none other than the eternal principles of *Sanātana Dharma*. Therefore it was decided to bring out this year the special number of *Kalyana-Kalpataru* as *Sanātana Dharma* Number.

The Kalyana-Kalpataru being a journal which primarily represents the Hindu view of spiritual life, its fulfilment naturally lies in presenting that view atleast. In this respect we hope the number will not be found much wanting although we are alive to the fact that the whole range of subjects circulated to saints and learned contributors has not been covered in this issue partly due to lack of space and also due to lack of contributions on the topics. Those authorities on *Sanātana Dharma* who have no command over English have penned their articles in Hindi and our

editorial staff has taken utmost care to represent their views faithfully while rendering their translation into English. We hope that our kind readers will derive much benefit from their unique treatment on the subject of *Sanātana Dharma.*

The failure of materialism is clearly brought to the fore by failure of communism as a system of Government in U.S.S.R. A few years before that system was hailed as one of the best political system. The law of jungle is coming more and more to govern the field of International politics. Man's vaunted power over nature threatens to engulf him and annihilate the entire civilization.

The ancient *Ṛṣis* of India knew the limitation of materialism. They formed a code of conduct based on the *Vedas* taking man as a spiritual entity whose goal of life is to attain *Mokṣa* which is another name for God-realization or Self-realization.

The human body is the best instrument for God-realization. *Dharma, Artha, Kāma,* and *Mokṣa*—these are the four *Puruṣārthas* (ultimate values) for a man, the foundation of the three being *Dharma.* Every human being can attain liberation if he can succeed in removing the ignorance which is supposed to veil the soul. Change of occupation and status is not necessary to gain this object. Lord Kṛṣṇa made this very clear in the *Gītā* when he said—

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः ।
स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥
यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।
स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥

(XVIII. 45-46)

"Man reaches perfection by being intent on performing his duty. Listen, how perfection is won by him who is devoted to his duty. He from whom all beings have emanated and by whom all this is pervaded, by worshipping him through his own duty, a man attains perfection."

The *Sanātana Dharma* is based on division of society into four *Varṇas* and four stages of life. These topics have been dealt at length in articles incorporated in this number. Moreover according to *Sanātana Dharma* the *Saṁskāras* or purification of a man

should begin from before his birth and the process should be carried on till his death. The soul comes to its rest when it reaches its origin—which is God. I do not propose to recapitulate all that has been written by the learned writers and saints in this issue. We invite the reader to go through every article if possible with as much care and attention as he can afford.

I have no words to give expression to our sense of indebtedness and gratitude to the all-merciful and almighty Lord who has condescended in his Supreme Grace to use us as His instrument for carrying out His noble will.

I must express my deep gratitude to Swāmī Rāmasukhadāsaji Maharāja, who always inspires us to carry out this responsibility of editing this journal. I owe indebtedness to various scholars and saints who have helped with their contributions. I acknowledge with pleasure the help and co-operation received from our colleagues. The editorial staff deserves special thanks for their sustained and valuable co-operation without which it would not be possible for me at all to bring out this issue.

I am highly indebted to our gracious readers and their associates for whom this attempt it being made and who are thus indirectly instrumental in inspiring noble thoughts in us. I crave their indulgence for the many errors that might have crept in this humble undertaking. If some good suggestions are made, we shall gladly attempt to incorporate them in the next issues.

It will be a matter of great satisfaction to us if our kind readers propagate the eternal principles of *Sanātana Dharma* among their friends and relations if they themselves are convinced of their utility in bringing out peace and salvation to the individuals adhering to them.

In the end again it may be submitted that the credit for whatever merits this issue may deserve goes to the Almighty Lord in whose hands I am a mere tool. The flaws and omissions are mine.

—*Editor*

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THE KALYANA-KALPATARU
BUSINESS RULES

1. **The Kalyana-Kalpataru** is published every month of the English calendar. Each ordinary issue contains 64 pages of printed matter besides the title sheets and one coloured illustration. Every **October Number** is a **Special Number** dealing with some particular theme.
2. Commercial advertisements are not accepted for publication in the magazine.
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Courses of Conduct for the Welfare of Mortals

From Brahmā (born of the cosmic person) appeared the (four grades of society under the names of) *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Kṣatriyas*, the *Vaiśyas* and the *Śūdras*, evolved (respectively) from His mouth, arms, thighs and feet and distinguished by their own (respective) conduct. The householder's order appeared from My hips and loins; the order of (lifelong) celibates from My heart; forest-life (the order of anchorites) from My chest (below the heart); while the order of recluses *(Saṁnyāsa)* was located in (sprang from the) crown of My head. The nature of men belonging to the (different) *Varṇas* and *Āśramas* developed according to the character of their place of origin (the limb of the cosmic body from which they sprang up)—low in the case of those of a low origin and lofty in the case of those sprung of high origin. Control of mind and the senses, meditation, (external as well as internal) purity, contentment, forgiveness, straightforwardness devotion to Me, compassion and truthfulness—these are the natural traits of a *Brāhmaṇa*. Majesty, strength, fortitude, valour, forbearance, liberality, industry, firmness, devotion to the *Brāhmaṇas* and rulership—these are the (distinguishing) traits of a *Kṣatriya*. Faith (in the scriptures as well as in the words of one's preceptor), firm adherence to liberality, sincerity (absence of hypocrisy), service to the *Brāhmaṇas* and remaining dissatisfied with hoards of money—these are the inborn characteristics of a *Vaiśya*. Sincere (guileless) service to the *Brāhmaṇa*, the cow and the gods too and contentment with whatever is obtained through such service—these are the inborn characteristics of a *Śūdra*. Impurity, mendacity, thieving, want of faith, quarrelling without cause, concupiscence, anger and cupidity are the inborn characteristics of the casteless. Non-violence, truthfulness, abstaining from theft, freedom from lust. anger and greed and doing what is pleasing and good to living beings—this constitutes the sacred duty of all the *Varṇas* (grades of society).

—*Bhāgavata* (XI. 17. 13—21)